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Charles J. Yeo, MD, FACS
Samuel D. Gross Professor and Chair, Department of Surgery

The academic year 2011/2012 is now four months old, and we are off to a splendid start! We (a) have welcomed several new faculty members and a bolus of categorical interns (see below), (b) had a leadership transition at our Methodist Hospital, (c) are in growth mode at Methodist with initiatives in General Surgery, Vascular Surgery, Wound Care and Surgical Oncology (see the cover story), and (d) with the leadership of Dr. Nicholas Cavarocchi we have seen remarkable growth in our adult ECMO program with outstanding clinical results and several research projects brought to fruition. Exciting times again this year at Jefferson!

I want to take this opportunity to also praise the Jefferson Foundation and particularly Lara Goldstein who returned from her recent maternity leave at full throttle. As Director of Development for the Department of Surgery, Lara has been instrumental in the tripling of philanthropic support to the Department between 2006 and 2011. She has partnered well with our researchers to assist with grant submissions and with our clinicians in building relationships with our grateful patients. Lara’s efforts have also culminated in a recent estate gift to the Department of Surgery, FACS, FCCP, the SCCU Director and Associate Professor of Surgery, leads a highly trained team that uses extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (an ECMO machine) to provide respiratory and cardiac support to patients whose lungs and/or hearts cannot function on their own. Because of the excellent outcomes – 70 to 80 percent survival rates for patients with life-threatening situations, up from a previous zero-based survival rate – Dr. Cavarocchi believes the Jefferson SCCU model will ultimately be adopted by all hospitals.

“Our SCCU model brings together the ECMO technology and a team of cardiac physicians, nurses and mid-level providers all trained in complex critical care,” Dr. Cavarocchi says. “We have implemented standardized management of patient care using established protocols built with evidence-based medicine.” Jefferson’s SCCU is currently the only service in the nation led by cardiothoracic surgeons.

Surgeon-led ECMO Treatment Improves Survival Rates in Surgical Cardiac Care Unit

The Jefferson Surgical Cardiac Care Unit (SCCU), reorganized in July 2010, delivers the best survival rates in Pennsylvania for patients plagued by serious lung and/or heart dysfunction. Nicholas Cavarocchi, MD, FACS, FCCP, the SCCU Director and Associate Professor of Surgery, leads a highly trained team that uses extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (an ECMO machine) to provide respiratory and cardiac support to patients whose lungs and/or hearts cannot function on their own. Because of the excellent outcomes – 70 to 80 percent survival rates for patients with life-threatening situations, up from a previous zero-based survival rate – Dr. Cavarocchi believes the Jefferson SCCU model will ultimately be adopted by all hospitals.

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Meet Our Surgical Interns

We have welcomed an amazing new group of categorical interns, selected from over one thousand applicants to our program. These doctors, who recently matched with Jefferson Medical College (JMC), started on June 20, 2011. Just a few months into their Jefferson surgical residency, we have all noticed their dedication to patient care, their energy and their excitement in joining the Jefferson community.

Addendum:
Just prior to going to press, we learned of the passing of our esteemed colleague, Dr. John H. Moore, Jr., on September 26, 2011. John was a committed Jeffersonian who touched the lives of thousands of patients, residents, students and staff. He was also a sage advisor. A fund, “The John H. Moore Jr., MD, Surgical Residency Fund” has been initiated in his honor.