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Taking it to the next level

The Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine was built on the premise of being bold, audacious, visionary and innovative. From the beginning, we committed ourselves to leading the way in Washington and across the country toward educating medical students for the future.

In four years, we’ve grown exponentially and accomplished more than many medical schools could in a decade. This year, it would have been easy to reflect on all that hard work and settle into a more comfortable rhythm. And yet, settling is not in our DNA. We are constantly striving, always improving, diligently working toward the vision for who we want to be in the future.

In short, this year was about taking the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine to the next level.

We launched our inaugural class of medical students into their Longitudinal Integrated Clerkships, extending our presence to all four regional campuses across the state and leading the nation as one of the first medical schools to take this unique approach to educating our students.

We nearly doubled our number of medical school applicants and enhanced and expanded our recruitment and pipeline events, inspiring future medical students across the state and resulting in an even more diverse incoming class of students who are passionate about our mission.

Our Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology continued its upward trajectory by recruiting its first class of M.S. Thesis and Ph.D. students, and our Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences continued its drive toward serving and treating local and regional community members through camps, therapy sessions, and volunteering their expertise.

Our research enterprise continued to reach new heights, securing more than $17 million in grants and contracts and making news headlines with groundbreaking studies that elevated our research reputation and provided key steps in solving some of our state’s and country’s biggest health care challenges.

We worked alongside the state legislature to approve $14.4 million to fund the third and fourth years of instruction to the first two cohorts of medical students and to fulfill our plan for an additional 20 students starting this fall, raising the class size from 60 to 80 medical students.

We achieved two major accreditation milestones that showcase our leadership and commitment to increasing medical education access. First, in the fall, receiving initial accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education to develop and sponsor residency and fellowship training programs. Then, in the spring, earning provisional accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education; an effort that involved hundreds of hours of work and thousands of pages of documentation from our amazing team to bring us one step closer to full accreditation.

Taking the College of Medicine to the next level is not easy. The work is hard and the days are long, but the incredible passion of our students and amazing dedication of our team brings our shared vision of the future into our reality today.

I look forward to another year of raising the stakes at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, continuing our rise to excellence for Washington and beyond.

Regards,

John Tomkowiak, MD, MOL
Founding Dean
“The medical students bring joy to my practice and to the patients they care for.”

— Dr. Kristen Wyrick
Third-year med students begin training in hospitals and clinics across Washington

In late June, patients and community members across the state saw new faces in white coats as the inaugural class of medical students from the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine began their clinical training as third-year medical students.

The third-year clinical training, called the Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC), is a unique feature of the College of Medicine’s curriculum that focuses on giving students experience in the comprehensive clinical care of patients. The College of Medicine is one of the first in the country to employ the LIC model for all third-year medical students.

Unlike traditional clerkships that focus on certain areas of medicine such as ob/gyn, pediatrics, and psychiatry for just a couple months each, the LIC integrates students with clinical faculty and patients over a 10-month time span and across all major medical disciplines simultaneously. This enables them to form relationships with patients and doctors, gain experience over time and across specialties, and see many of the same patients over several months to get a complete picture of treatment.

“Launching the longitudinal integrated clerkship is a major milestone for us as a medical school and reinforces our focus on providing a community-based education that prepares our students to serve the communities of Washington,” said Dr. Jaime Bowman, clerkship director at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

Approximately 15 third-year medical students are based at each of the College of Medicine’s four clinical campus locations: Everett, Spokane, Tri-Cities and Vancouver. Students are assigned to doctors in those communities whom they work alongside to actively participate in patient care. Patients seen by those doctors or in participating clinics or hospitals are invited to take part in the medical students’ training.

“The clerkship years are an exciting time for our medical students and for our state,” said Bowman. “This is the time in which our citizens get to play an active role in building relationships with our students and shaping them into the doctors they will become.”

Patient participation plays an important role in educating students and increasing the likelihood they will remain in Washington. A wide variety of patient interactions give students the chance to build the relationships and experiences critical for successfully practicing medicine. In turn, patients have the chance to build relationships with the students, which they often say improves their overall health care experience.

The rewards are significant for the hosting doctors and medical staff, as well. In addition to creating recruitment opportunities for hospitals and clinics, students often uncover new thinking and broaden the diagnoses considered, which improves satisfaction for all.

“I love being a teacher as much as I love being a doctor,” said Dr. Kristen Wyrick, family medicine physician at the Everett Clinic. “The medical students bring joy to my practice and to the patients they care for.” She added, “Family medicine is a specialty dealing with nation-wide shortages, so I value the ability to mentor and coach students.”

To learn more about the LIC program, visit medicine.wsu.edu/LIC.
Departments
Department of Biomedical Sciences
Department of Medical Education and Clinical Sciences
Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology
Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences
Sleep and Performance Research Center
Virtual Clinical Center

Degree and Certificate Programs
Doctor of Medicine (MD)
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nutrition and Exercise Physiology
Master of Science Coordinated Program in Dietetics (MS CPD), Nutrition and Exercise Physiology
Master of Science (MS) in Nutrition and Exercise Physiology
Master of Science (MS) in Speech and Hearing Sciences
Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Speech and Hearing Sciences
Bachelor of Science (BS) in Nutrition and Exercise Physiology
Graduate Certificate in Leadership

295 ENROLLED
142 SCIENTIFIC STUDIES PUBLISHED
54 GRANTS SUBMITTED
11 GRANTS AWARDED
Meet the class:

34 (28%) FIRST-GENERATION

25 (RANGE: 20-36) MEAN AGE

21 (17.5%) RURAL CHILDHOOD COUNTY

58% (70) FEMALE

7 (6%) UNDERREPRESENTED IN MEDICINE
HISPANIC, AFRICAN AMERICAN, AMERICAN INDIAN

Pathways to medicine

DARE TO DREAM HEALTH SCIENCES ACADEMY

Through the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Columbia Basin Pathway, we hosted 23 high-achieving migrant high school students (juniors and seniors) June 23-29 for an on-campus experience in the health sciences. This campus-wide partnership, led by the College of Medicine, gave students experience in a range of health care disciplines with faculty and professionals, all through the lens of health care challenges faced by the migrant community. Students engaged in case-based learning along with hands-on activities, community building, and mentorship by current health professional students. They received course credit for their efforts.

SPOKANE VALLEY TECH STUDENTS OF MEDICINE

For its second year, the College of Medicine hosted a two-week, pre-med course providing comprehensive resources to high school students who dream of getting into medical school and becoming doctors. Students reviewed various human body systems, participated in hands-on medical labs, explored virtual emergency room cases, and created a medical school Curriculum Vitae for high school credit.
Major News Stories in Research

STUDY REVEALS HOW SHIFT WORK DISRUPTS METABOLISM

Research led by WSU sleep scientist Dr. Hans Van Dongen, director of the WSU Sleep and Performance Research Center and a professor in the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, revealed new clues on how night shift work disturbs the body’s metabolism, increasing risk of obesity, diabetes, and other metabolic disorders. Published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, findings from the study suggest that working nights causes the internal rhythms in digestive organs to shift, making them out of sync with the master biological clock in the brain.

Working with colleagues at the WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and the University of Surrey in the U.K., Van Dongen’s team studied 14 healthy volunteers who had completed either a three-day simulated day shift schedule or a three-day simulated night shift schedule. They collected blood samples at three-hour intervals over the following 24-hour period, during which participants were kept awake under carefully controlled conditions that included constant light, temperature, posture, and food intake. After analyzing the samples for metabolites—products of chemical reactions involved in digestion—they found that metabolites related to the liver, gut, and pancreas had shifted by a full 12 hours, even though the master clock in participants’ brains had only moved by about 2 hours.

“As a result, some biological signals in shift workers’ bodies are saying it’s day while other signals are saying it’s night, which causes disruption of metabolism,” Van Dongen said.

More research is needed to show whether the shift in rhythms is driven by shift workers’ altered sleep/wake schedules, the shifted timing of their food intake, or both. Once that is known, scientists could work toward developing countermeasure strategies or treatments—such as strategic naps or differently timed food schedules—to get shift workers’ internal rhythms back in sync.

Findings from the study suggest that working nights causes the internal rhythms in digestive organs to shift, making them out of sync with the master biological clock in the brain.
REPORT SHOWS HIGHER MORTALITY RATES, WORSE HEALTH OUTCOMES IN EASTERN VERSUS WESTERN WASHINGTON

Researchers at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine released a report that showed eastern Washington counties suffer from higher mortality rates in nine out of 10 of the state’s leading causes of death than western Washington counties.

The report, which uses interactive data visualization, compares health outcomes in eastern and western Washington. Researchers plan to use the data to understand the unique health and social issues of eastern Washington versus those in western Washington, and as a baseline to track and monitor the impact of the College of Medicine on community health.

“The aim of the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine is to solve problems in challenging health care environments, particularly rural and urban underserved communities,” said Dr. Ofer Amram, assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology and co-author of the report. “With so much of eastern Washington consisting of small and isolated communities, which face a distinctly different set of health issues compared to communities on the west side of the state, this report enables us to better understand what and where the issues are.”

Using age-adjusted mortality rates from the 2000 U.S. census and registered deaths from the Washington State Department of Health, the report found that the 20 counties comprising eastern Washington suffer from higher rates of cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer’s disease, unintentional injuries, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, diabetes, suicide, chronic liver disease and flu. Overdose was the only cause of death that was higher in western Washington.

Now that researchers know where death rates are higher in the state, they plan to publish future reports that explore the causes behind the health disparities between the two regions including poverty, rurality and access to health care.

“The information contained in this report and subsequent reports is critical to improving health in our communities,” said Dr. Jonathan Espenschied, associate dean of graduate medical education and continuing medical education and co-author of the report. “This will allow decision makers to pinpoint areas with poor health outcomes, develop research questions to better understand the causes of health disparities in our communities, and ultimately prioritize resources to areas in-need in a more efficient way.”

To view the complete interactive report, visit chaselab.net/WAReport_Leaflet/index.html.
Researchers at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, in collaboration with the Oregon Health and Sciences University, are conducting a four-year study of veterans to understand the impacts of discontinuing opioid use for chronic pain.

Since the Veterans Health Administration’s 2012 peak of prescribing opioid medications to nearly 900,000 veterans, rates have declined annually to fewer than 700,000 in 2016. These downward trends, which are likely to continue, are the result of widespread implementation of the VA Opioid Safety Initiative, efforts at VA hospitals to promote safe opioid prescribing, and new opioid prescribing guidelines discouraging long-term opioid therapy for chronic non-cancer pain.

In the wake of these efforts, veterans have reported unintended consequences of opioid discontinuation including increased rates of overdose and death due to heroin, onset of suicidal ideation and resulting suicide attempts, and disengagement from VA care. Despite the considerable attention and resources devoted to addressing the opioid epidemic, very little is known about the impact of discontinuing opioids for chronic pain or alternative ways for patients to manage pain.

Dr. Sterling McPherson, associate professor at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, and Dr. Travis Lovejoy, physician at the Portland VA and Oregon Health and Sciences University, are working to find the answers. Their study will obtain insights from a diverse national sample of 1,144 VA patients followed over 24 months to get longitudinal data on quality of life, pain, substance use and mental health symptoms, perceived quality of patient-clinician relationships, and general and pain-specific health care use. Additional clinical, pharmacy, and utilization data will be extracted from patients’ VA electronic health records.

The results of the study will provide VA operations administrators and opioid prescribing clinicians with information that characterizes opioid discontinuation from patients’ perspectives. These perspectives can then be used to inform best practices for discontinuing opioid therapy, mitigating negative consequences of discontinuation, and engaging and empowering patients to manage chronic pain with non-opioid treatment.
WSU College of Medicine receives initial accreditation for graduate medical education

In October 2018, the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine received initial accreditation for graduate medical education from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

Granted a little more than a year after the college welcomed its inaugural class of students in August 2017, accreditation allows the college to begin developing and sponsoring ACGME residency and fellowship training programs.

“This is a key milestone in enabling us to fulfill our mission of improving health care quality and access in rural and underserved communities in Washington,” said Dr. John Tomkowiak, founding dean. “Not only does expanding graduate medical education increase the chance that students will remain in Washington to practice medicine, it offers increased opportunity to build residency programs in more communities east of the Cascades where they’re needed most.”

Graduate medical education (GME) is the three- to seven-year phase of medical education following graduation from medical school that prepares physicians for independent practice in a medical specialty. While about 43 percent of medical school graduates will practice in the state where they graduate, that number increases to 70 percent when they complete both their medical education and their residency in the same state.

According to 2018-19 ACGME data, there are 170 ACGME accredited training programs in Washington, however, 158 are located west of the Cascades and 12 are located east of the Cascades. This results in approximately 33 trainees per 100,000 population west of the Cascades and just nine trainees per 100,000 population east of the Cascades. The national average is 37.8 ACGME trainees per 100,000 population.

MINI MED SCHOOLS HELP K-12 STUDENTS ASPIRE TO CAREERS IN HEALTHCARE

Building a future workforce of healthcare leaders starts by inspiring children and teens to pursue a career in the field.

This year, the College of Medicine connected with more than 3,000 middle and high school students in 10 counties to spark that inspiration. Through age appropriate mini medical school activities including ultrasound imaging, CPR simulation, Stop the Bleed drills, suture clinics, type 2 diabetes education with glucometers, laparoscopic surgery simulators, “guts and butts” (x-rays and digestion activities), the Brain Architecture Game, and other tools and specialties, our faculty, staff and medical students provided unique experiences and helped K-12 students dream big about being a healthcare professional.

98 CLINICAL PARTNERS
189 new volunteer clinical faculty
54 NEW PAID FACULTY AND STAFF
$2.2 million IN INCREASED PAYROLLS (Excluding grants and contracts)
110 local, regional and national boards and committees represented
3,000 K-12 STUDENT INTERACTIONS in 10 counties
$17,263,904 GRANTS AND CONTRACTS AWARDED
Student volunteers make the difference

**BRINGING BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE TO STUDENTS**

Michaela Fallon, a third-year medical student, has volunteered every other Tuesday at Rogers High School as an aid in their Project Lead the Way (PLTW) science class. PLTW curriculum is tailored toward showing the students different biomedical careers. The project is the nation’s leading provider of K-12 STEM programs, and it allows students to learn biomedical sciences through real-world situations and applied learning experiences.

While Michaela originally signed up as part of the MD program’s service-learning component of the curriculum, she continued to volunteer with the project. “I thought to myself, ‘That was good for my mental health and I really care about these kids, so I’m going to keep doing it,’” said Michaela.

Michaela credits her experience working with the students for further refining her sense of empathy and communication style—particularly when interacting with people from a position of power.

“They kids have gone through more than I will ever experience in my entire life,” said Michaela. “I just had to recognize that I’m not able to solve their family problems, but if I can joke around and be a listening ear... that can help.”

**BUILDING SUCCESS THROUGH SOCCER**

Spokane is the home of PASS (Player Adaptive Soccer Skills), an organization that provides soccer to children with physical or cognitive challenges. Third-year medical student Taylor Hale has volunteered with PASS for more than a year—even though she has never used the hours as part of the program’s service-learning requirements. Knowing and working with people with cognitive challenges has been a constant thread in Taylor’s life, so getting to merge her love of soccer with her passion for working with people with disabilities was a great opportunity. “I can do something to add to their life, so why not?” said Taylor.

PASS brings together young athletes with a variety of skill levels and backgrounds. “We have everything from kids who have down syndrome to autism to cerebral palsy,” said Taylor, who finds getting to interact with the kids and their families to often be best part of her day.

“One of my favorite things is just watching these kids be themselves fully and getting to play a part,” said Taylor. “A really small thing in my day can be a huge thing in their day.”

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“If I can joke around and be a listening ear... that can help.”
— Michaela Fallon

“One of my favorite things is just watching these kids be themselves.”
— Taylor Hale
Major headlines:

98 STORIES

114 MENTIONS

98 STORIES

114 MENTIONS

WSU medical school in Spokane seeks $3.6M to expand

Report: Eastern Washington residents have higher mortality
Coverage in:

AP
msn
Yahoo
The Seattle Times
The Guardian
Daily Mail
Women’s Health
The Spokesman-Review
Spokane
Paxson Radio Group
Puget Sound Business Journal
HeraldNet
Financial cooperative brings simulated learning to life

A new family joined the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, but not just any family. Thanks to a generous gift from Northwest Farm Credit Services, the college welcomed the simulator family including SimMan, SimMom, and SimBaby to the Virtual Clinical Center this spring.

These high-tech simulators, which can breathe, sweat, bleed, display neurological symptoms, and voice pain provide an essential link between classroom and clinical training. Students can take the information they learn in the classroom and in the anatomy lab and apply it by performing procedures on the simulators to practice real life scenarios.

For example, SimMom, which is the most advanced labor and delivery simulator, will enable students to practice pre- to post-natal care and a range of basic and advanced scenarios for delivery.

In addition to giving students a fully immersive experience true to complex, real-life situations, the simulators enable them to have the experiences without risks to patients. Students can increase their experience and build confidence through experiential learning, then take their skills into clinical settings across the state.
Insurance company provides grant for new rural residency programs

As part of its social impact pledge to invest in and improve health care access in eastern Washington, Premera Blue Cross provided a $5.5 million grant to the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine to develop medical residency programs in rural and underserved areas.

The grant will provide funds to launch operations for new residency programs, as well as to build out rural clinical rotation opportunities for medical students in their third and fourth years of undergraduate medical education.

“Premera is proud to be supporting Washington State University in their efforts to deliver healthcare to remote and medically underserved communities in our state,” said Jeff Roe, CEO of Premera Blue Cross.

Pipeline programs, medical school clerkships, and residency programs that expose students to community-based health clinics and rural settings have a greater likelihood of producing physicians who practice in these environments. While approximately 43 percent of medical school graduates will establish a medical practice in the state where they graduate, that number increases to 70 percent when they complete both their undergraduate and graduate medical education in the state.
At the 3rd Annual Faculty and Staff Awards Ceremony in June, the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine celebrated another exceptional year of hard work, dedication and great success. While we honor and appreciate every member of our team, several individuals were recognized for their outstanding contributions this year.
Promotions & Tenure

Radha Nandagopal, MD
Medical Education and Clinical Sciences, was promoted to
CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Jeannie Padowski, PhD
Biomedical Sciences, was promoted to
CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Sherri J. Beasley
April D. Davis, MS, RDN
Weimin Li, MD, PhD
Michael G. McDonnell, PhD
Olga P. Shiva
Crystal Lederhos Smith, MS

Weihang Chai, PhD
Brett Oglesbee, MBA
Jonathan Wisor, PhD

Theodore R. Chauvin, PhD
John M. Roll, PhD

LENGTH — OF — SERVICE

5 YEARS
Sherri J. Beasley
April D. Davis, MS, RDN
Weimin Li, MD, PhD
Michael G. McDonnell, PhD
Olga P. Shiva
Crystal Lederhos Smith, MS

10 YEARS
Weihang Chai, PhD
Brett Oglesbee, MBA
Jonathan Wisor, PhD

15 YEARS
Theodore R. Chauvin, PhD
John M. Roll, PhD