

WSU

SPOKANE

Spring/Summer 2016 • Volume 5

An inside look at WSU's health sciences campus

A man in a grey suit and red striped tie is talking to a group of students. One student is holding a sign with a red heart and the word "Our".

Great Expectations

WSU Medical School Moves Ahead

pg. 1

New Dean of Nursing

Brings 25 Years of Academic Experience

pg. 3

Teaching Health Clinic

To Open This Summer

pg. 17

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WSU Spokane is distributed free of charge to alumni, donors, faculty, staff, students, community members and friends of Washington State University Spokane.

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WSU Spokane is published by Washington State University Spokane, 600 N. Riverpoint Blvd., PO Box 1495, Spokane, WA 99210.

Views expressed in *WSU Spokane* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official policy of Washington State University Spokane.

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Cover photo by Cori Medeiros.

A Letter from the Chancellor



Dear Friends of WSU Spokane,

A visit to our campus on April 1 from Dr. Kirk Schulz, Washington State University's recently-selected president, brought out WSU's Fight Song and an enthusiastic welcome to him and his wife, Dr. Noel Schulz, who will be joining the College of Engineering.

Their "whistlestop" tour of WSU's five campuses made for great excitement. Dr. Schulz will be coming to WSU from Kansas State University, where he had success on building the research enterprise. During his tenure the university moved up from the "very high research activity" classification in 2010 to the "highest research activity" in 2015 in rankings by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

This focus on research aligns with what we are already doing on WSU's Spokane campus, the University's health sciences campus. In a three-year period, we have doubled the number of grant and contract proposals submitted, from \$60 million to more than \$128 million. Awards have increased 72 percent since 2011.

Having a robust research portfolio is imperative for our campus to address global issues, stimulate economic development and give students excellent career opportunities. In fact, one of WSU's five interdisciplinary research initiatives—known as our "Grand Challenges"—is "sustaining health" and WSU Spokane is expected to lead this initiative through our colleges of nursing, pharmacy and medicine. The research underway on our campus is finding solutions to sustain health for our city, our nation and our world. In Research Roundup on page 7 read how our autism research is finding a potential key to earlier diagnosis, and how we are studying the interactions between natural products and commonly used drugs.

Commercializing research is often the next step after a major discovery. Spokane's University District is the perfect location for research to grow into private companies, with incubation capabilities and entrepreneurs working together. Lisa Shaffer's Paw Print Genetics office in the McKinstry Innovation Center is a case in point. Dr. Shaffer was a tenured professor in the School of Molecular Biosciences here from 2002 to 2008. In 2003 she co-founded Signature Genomic Laboratories in partnership with Sacred Heart Medical Center and PAML. Dr. Shaffer sold the company in 2010 and founded Genetic Veterinary Sciences in 2012. Paw Print Genetics is the company's clinical laboratory.

Our commercialization partners and trade associations play an important role in sustaining health and developing our life science economy. That's why we support the University District and Ignite Northwest, a business accelerator in the University District. Read more about them in this edition.

With press time coinciding with President-elect Schulz' visit, we look forward to an interview with him for our next issue. Until then, please enjoy our spring update on the amazing things happening in the University District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" being more prominent than the last name "Brown".

Lisa J. Brown, Chancellor, Washington State University Health Sciences Spokane

Contents

Expectations High for Future Medical School

When Elson Floyd envisioned a WSU medical school, he had big dreams. The College of Medicine is moving ahead on those dreams.



New College of Nursing Dean Begins

Joyce Griffin-Sobel brings more than 25 years of experience in academic nursing and passion for interprofessional education to campus.



Former Indian Health Service Director Joins College of Medicine

Yvette Roubideaux will lead efforts in diversity, inclusion and leadership.



Research Highlights

From the impact of split sleep schedules on truck drivers to new anesthesia safety standards, researchers share their work.



College of Pharmacy Students Excel in Leadership Activities

Students set out to improve the profession.



pg. **11** Campus Life in Photos

pg. **13** Mark Mansfield Leading University District's Transformation

pg. **15** Lean Initiative Serves Dual Purpose on Campus

pg. **17** Anticipation Builds for Opening of New Teaching Health Clinic

pg. **19** Prescription Assistance Reduces Trips to Hospital

pg. **21** STCU Here for Good

pg. **23** Ignite Northwest Propels Entrepreneurs



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WSU Medical School Ahead

Great Expectations

By Doug Nadvornick

When Elson Floyd envisioned a Washington State University medical school, he had big dreams.



Elson S. Floyd

“This medical school is....about the improvement of the quality of life for Washingtonians. It’s about making sure that they will have access to high-quality health care. It’s about making sure that they will go into our hospitals and to our clinics, understanding and knowing that they are being cared for by some of the best and brightest who went through a training program that was collaborative in nature but responsive to the needs of the communities in which they were part of. And we will do that in conjunction with every community in this state. Every community. That’s the visionary part of it, if you will. Is it bold? Absolutely. Is it audacious? Yes. It’s necessary. And we’re going to do everything as we can as a university to make sure that we deliver high quality medical care.”

— WSU President Elson S. Floyd
April 2, 2015, Spokane

He spoke about training more doctors in Washington to alleviate the state’s physician shortage and about using WSU’s stature as the state’s land-grant

university to extend the new school’s influence into every county.

Nearly a year after his passing as the new school that now bears Floyd’s name is in the process of being created, the expectations are high. Prospective students are contacting the school to find out when they can apply. Several of Washington’s healthcare providers have signed agreements to teach WSU medical students in clinical rotations. And Founding Dean John Tomkowiak, M.D., is leading the effort to give the state’s newest publicly-funded medical school its own unique identity.

“We are so excited”

It was an admittedly friendly audience.

It was a late Thursday afternoon and dozens of WSU Cougar alumni business owners had set up displays in a ballroom at the Washington State Convention Center in downtown Seattle for the annual “CougsFirst!” trade show.

The booth for the new Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine sat on a strategically busy corner. A few paces away people waited in line for samples from Doubleback Winery, owned by former Cougar football quarterback Drew Bledsoe. Trade show participants with their glasses of red wine wandered by the College of Medicine booth and were greeted by Vice Dean Jim Zimmerman or other college administrators with a handshake and a question, “Have you heard about our new medical school?”

Guests enthusiastically responded – and even initiated conversations – with comments such as “We’re so excited” or “This is the right time for this.” They talked about how the medical school would

add to WSU's stature as a Tier 1 research university and they commended the visionary leadership of President Floyd.

Others said they had heard about the proposal, but knew few of the details. They asked questions about when the medical school would begin teaching students, about the status of the accreditation process and where prospective applicants could find more information.

Many of the same questions were asked by members of a different audience – healthcare providers – the following week at the Northwest Rural Health Conference in Spokane, where the college also sponsored a booth.

“The most common feeling expressed was the hope that our College of Medicine will help increase the supply of primary care physicians,” said George Novan, the associate dean for Student Affairs.

“I had some great conversations with physicians and administrators from facilities in rural and underserved areas in Washington who are interested in working on strengthening the pathway for local students to a career as a physician,” said Yvette Roubideaux, the associate dean for Diversity, Inclusion and Leadership. “Some want more information about how to be involved in teaching medical students. They also want to know how the college can help them recruit physicians to work in their communities.”

Seeking Permission

Before the college can begin training students, it must first earn its preliminary accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), the accrediting agency for allopathic medical schools in the U.S. and Canada.

In February, the LCME granted the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine “candidate” status. In late June, the agency will send an expert review team to Spokane to pore over the college's application, ask hard questions and report on the school's readiness to begin teaching medical students.

Then at its meeting in October, the agency may determine whether WSU's medical school is ready to recruit and admit students. If that permission is given, the college expects to immediately begin a marketing campaign to attract potential students.

One theme that will likely be part of that campaign has been used from the beginning of WSU's effort to create a medical school: students will have the opportunity to learn how to provide primary care, especially to patients in rural and urban underserved areas. That appeals to prospective students who have sent email inquiries to the college.

In addition, the college has identified several other themes designed to help it stand out from other medical schools. All were developed from ideas raised during a

culture building workshop led by the dean in December. The first theme is allowing students to personalize their education.

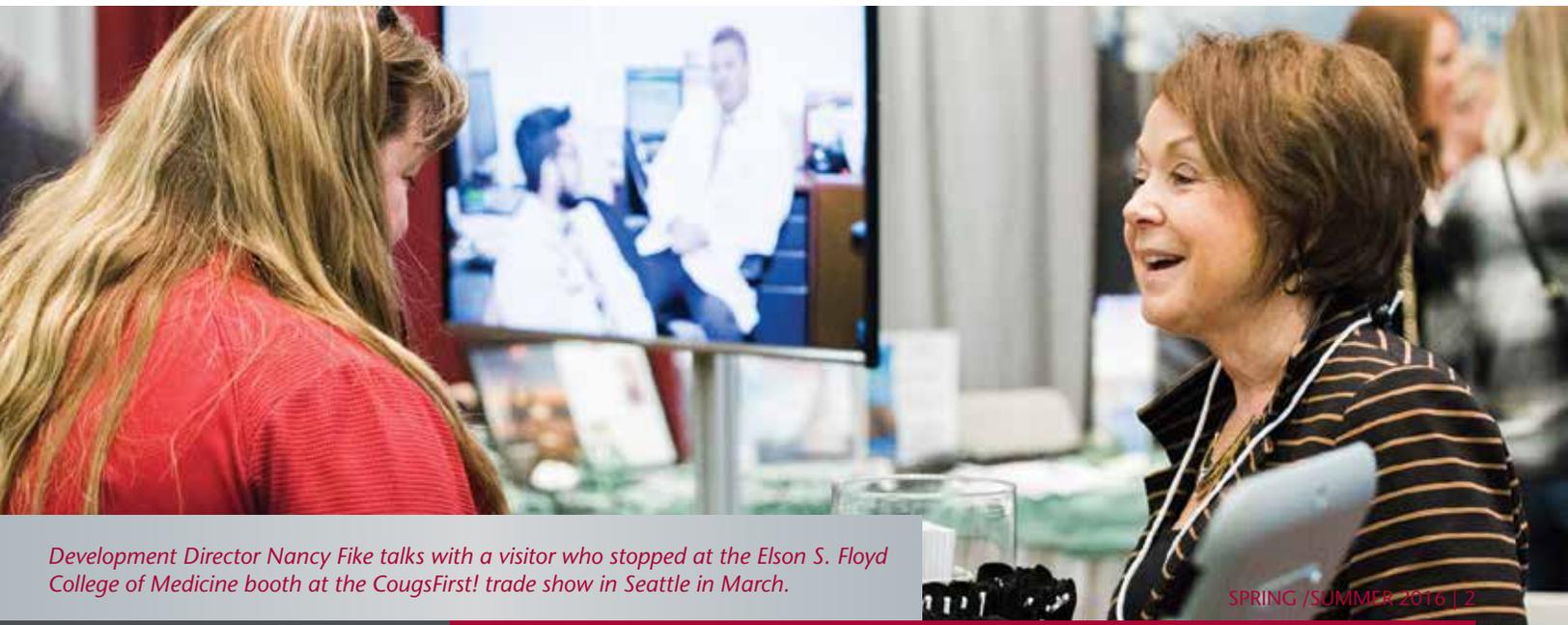
“That means we will not only provide them with a rigorous academic and clinical education, but we will also help them define and start down the paths which they choose to follow,” said Tomkowiak. “It's something few medical schools do. We want to become really good at it.”

Tomkowiak also wants to create physician leaders and entrepreneurs. He says the school plans to build into its curriculum a series of courses designed to develop students' leadership skills. Graduates will receive a certificate in leadership.

Finally, he wants to create for students a lifetime bond with their medical school.

“Once our students graduate and move into the workforce, we want them to use their connection to the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine as a way to further their careers and build networks with other healthcare providers,” Tomkowiak said. “We think the phrase ‘Once a Cougar, Always a Cougar’ is apropos.”

For WSU alumni, “Once a Cougar, Always a Cougar” is a powerful message, one that guides the “CougsFirst!” gathering in Seattle. Ten or 12 years from now, it's not hard to imagine WSU-trained physicians participating in the event, perpetuating President Floyd's dream of Cougar doctors serving their communities. ■



Development Director Nancy Fike talks with a visitor who stopped at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine booth at the CougsFirst! trade show in Seattle in March.

Welcome

Dean Joyce P. Griffin-Sobel

By Alli Benjamin



Dean Joyce Griffin-Sobel visits with nursing students Koby Binks (left) and Jamaal Jones in the simulation lab.

The new dean of the College of Nursing arrived in April with more than 25 years of experience in academic nursing.



Joyce Griffin-Sobel

Dean Joyce P. Griffin-Sobel, Ph.D., R.N., is the college's seventh dean and succeeds Patricia Butterfield, Ph.D., who returned to the faculty and her research.

"I am so honored to be joining

WSU as dean of the College of Nursing,"

Griffin-Sobel said. "I am deeply committed to interprofessional education and practice, as it is the foundation for moving health care toward improved quality and patient-centered care."

WSU Interim President Daniel Bernardo noted that the College of Nursing is known for its intercollegiate foundation, its accomplished educators, researchers, and students, and its impact on the state's workforce.

"It is the anchor of our Spokane campus and fundamental to our community and to the future of health care in the state," Bernardo said. "I am excited that someone of Dr. Griffin-Sobel's caliber will be moving it forward."

"My career in nursing education is centered on educating nurses to be leaders in health care with in-depth technological sophistication, comprehensive experiential knowledge acquired in simulation and clinical practice, and outstanding teaching," Griffin-Sobel said. "I was attracted to WSU because of its faculty, its research programs, and its commitment to the student experience. I am excited to work with the WSU community to continue its legacy of creating the best prepared nurses to care for Washington's citizens."

Griffin-Sobel joins WSU from State University of New York (SUNY) Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY, where she served as dean and professor. Prior to SUNY Upstate, she was at Hunter College School of Nursing, City University of New York, where she served as acting dean, assistant dean of Curriculum and Technology, and director of Undergraduate Programs.

Griffin-Sobel led the SUNY College of Nursing through two successful accreditations, created a dedicated education unit in a behavioral health center where graduate students and faculty delivered integrated primary care, and led a major increase in research and scholarship.

At Hunter, Griffin-Sobel was principal investigator for New York City Nursing

Education Consortium in Technology, a HRSA-funded faculty development grant in teaching with technology, including simulation, informatics, telehealth and mobile health. She was instrumental in the nursing school's successful application to the National League for Nursing to be named a Center of Excellence in 2010. Griffin-Sobel also aided in the creation of partnerships for academic progression of students from junior to senior colleges within the City University of New York system, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Partners in Nursing program.

A member of the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1988-1995, Griffin-Sobel served as director of clinical nursing research for the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps, where she developed the first program of clinical nursing research. She

held the rank of lieutenant commander. Her other academic appointments include the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey School of Nursing, University of Illinois at Chicago College of Nursing, University of Hawaii at Manoa School of Nursing and the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. Griffin-Sobel has been awarded more than \$5 million dollars in grant funding.

Griffin-Sobel's clinical career has been in oncology, particularly care of those with gastrointestinal malignancies. She earned her Ph.D. at New York University in nursing, her M.S. in nursing as a clinical nurse specialist at Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing and her B.S. in nursing at Herbert H. Lehman College. Griffin-Sobel is a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing and the Academy of Nursing Education. ■



WSU Spokane's Nursing Building.



Former Indian Health Service Director Brings Lifelong Mission to Spokane

By Terren Roloff

Mallory Williams, M.D., (left) a professor of surgery at the Howard University School of Medicine, visited WSU Spokane in March in conjunction with the National Library of Medicine Exhibit entitled "Opening Doors: Contemporary African American Academic Surgeons." He is shown, from left, with Yvette Roubideaux, M.D.; Chancellor Lisa Brown, Ph.D.; and College of Medicine Dean John Tomkowiak, M.D.

As an American Indian teenager in Rapid City, South Dakota, Yvette Roubideaux experienced long waits when she went to the doctor at the local Indian Health Service clinic.

She heard from relatives who were frustrated at not knowing which physician they would see, and who were not happy with their care.

It got her to thinking that maybe she could be one of the solutions to the problems in Indian health.

"As a teenager I realized that I had never seen an American Indian physician and that by becoming a physician, I could do something to help improve health care for American Indian communities."

It wasn't until 1988 when Roubideaux went to her first Association of American Indian Physicians meeting as a medical student that she first met American Indian

physicians. The meeting helped strengthen her career focus.

Roubideaux, M.D., M.P.H., a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, has made it her life's mission to ensure other young people don't have to wait as long to see physicians who are from their own communities and can get better access to quality health care.

"Underserved communities of all kinds need doctors who are from there, who understand what needs to improve, and who are willing to practice medicine there because of the relationships they already have from growing up there," Roubideaux said.

She is using that knowledge to create

stronger physician career pathways to and from rural and underserved communities and WSU's health sciences campus, and hopes also to help increase the number of physicians trained to practice in those areas.

Being a part of the team developing the new College of Medicine in Spokane is the next step in her own career pathway.

Roubideaux is the associate dean for Diversity, Inclusion and Leadership and a clinical professor in the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine. Prior to this position she served as senior advisor to the Secretary for American Indians and Alaska Natives and as the director of the Indian Health Service (IHS) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in President Barack Obama's administration.

The first American Indian woman to head the IHS, Roubideaux earned all three of her degrees from Harvard and completed her medical residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. She then joined the IHS in Arizona in the 1990s as a clinician and administrator, spending three years on the San Carlos Apache Indian reservation and one year on the Gila River Indian reservation. After 11 years in academics, she was asked to join the Obama Administration.

As director of the IHS, she worked with the administration and Congress to increase resources for the agency, and worked with employees to make significant improvements in business practices and delivery of care. Still, the shortage of primary care physicians was a significant and growing challenge for the more than 600 hospitals, clinics and health stations located mostly on or near Tribal communities that she oversaw.

Distribution is a Problem

In Washington, 19 of 39 counties are severely underserved by physicians (10.4 or fewer doctors per 10,000 residents). On the contrary, nearly half of all physicians are located in King County alone, greatly exceeding its 29 percent population share.

Roubideaux hopes to change that by partnering with K-12 schools, community colleges, tribal colleges, universities, health facilities and community leadership in underserved areas to better prepare students for a medical school education.

She has already met with some K-12 leaders in the state and learned that they are looking for more tools for teachers and advisors on the physician career pathway and a stronger link from the current STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) emphasis in high schools to medical careers.

She is working to help promote diversity and inclusion with events and activities

by bringing physician role models to the health sciences campus and local schools, such as trauma surgeon Dr. Mallory Williams, who recently helped celebrate the National Library of Medicine Exhibit—"Opening Doors: Contemporary Academic African American Surgeons."

And she is making herself and other College of Medicine faculty available to talk to students at schools, to present and meet with civic organizations in both rural and urban underserved communities, and to explore partnerships to strengthen the physician career pathway.

In fact, Roubideaux is reminded often of her high school days and why she decided to become a doctor. Just as she felt compelled to be a resource for her community, she's helping young people today realize that they can be a solution for health needs in their communities. ■



Roubideaux spoke with pharmacy students Angela Armstrong (left) and Pahulpreet Handa (center) about the expanded role pharmacists have in counseling patients as a part of interprofessional teams.

Autism expert Georgina Lynch sits in the lab facility where her eye-tracking study was conducted. The research serves as the basis for her Ph.D. dissertation.

Research Roundup

By Judith Van Dongen

Autism Research Finds Potential Key to Earlier Diagnosis

The eyes are the window to the soul, but they may also provide a window into autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as suggested by findings from a pilot study conducted at WSU Spokane.



Georgina Lynch

As part of the laboratory study, Georgina Lynch, M.S.—a faculty member in the College of Medicine's Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences and a longtime expert on ASD—tested the pupil reflexes of 24 youths aged between 10 and 17 with a penlight test, much like the one being routinely administered in doctors' offices. Half of the subjects had high-functioning ASD; the other half did not. Using sophisticated eye-tracking software, Lynch and her collaborators found that the pupils of subjects with ASD took longer to constrict in response to an increase in light.

Lynch presented the discovery at the 2015 International Meeting for Autism Research, where it was met with substantial interest. If it can be replicated in follow-up studies she is planning, her finding could lead to improved diagnosis of ASD. Lynch envisions a handheld device that health care providers could use as an initial screening tool for ASD. She said it could be

used to supplement behavioral testing to help get kids diagnosed earlier and capture those who are frequently missed.

Lynch said the results from her eye-tracking study also add to scientists' understanding of brain function in ASD, given that the pupil reflex originates in the brain stem. "We need to rethink that ASD is just something related to behavior," she said. "If we can better understand the underlying brain function, it may eventually help us improve our approach to intervention."

Study to Examine Quality, Cost of Pharmacist Care for Minor Ailments



Julie Akers



Linda Garrelts MacLean

In the state of Washington, pharmacists have long been permitted to do what only a handful of other states have recently started allowing: assess and treat patients with certain minor conditions—such as strep throat and uncomplicated urinary tract infections—through a collaborative agreement with a physician.

With a four-year, \$769,372 grant from the National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundation, a WSU College of Pharmacy faculty team led by Julie Akers, Pharm.D., and Linda Garrelts MacLean, B. Pharm., R.Ph., has set out to study the effectiveness of pharmacist-provided care for 15 minor ailments and conditions. They will compare the quality and cost of care provided in primary care offices, urgent care clinics, and emergency rooms.

The team is collaborating with more than 35 community pharmacies throughout the state to offer pharmacist-provided patient care services and collect data for the study. Premera Blue Cross, a regional health plan, will provide anonymous data on care provided in the other settings.

Akers hopes to see the study confirm that patients who are seen by pharmacists pay less and receive equal quality care to that provided elsewhere. That could pave the way for more Washington pharmacies to offer these services and help the push for legislative changes in other states.

"It could really improve patient access, especially in rural settings where small independent pharmacies are often the only health care providers for miles around," Akers said.

Garrelts MacLean noted that it would also ease the burden on physicians, allowing them to spend more time with complex patient cases.

\$1.4M Grant Funds Field Study of Split Sleep Schedules in Truck Drivers

Kimberly Honn, Ph.D., a postdoctoral researcher in the Sleep and Performance Research Center, has received \$1.4 million from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration for the Flexible Sleeper Berth Pilot Program, a study of split sleep schedules in long-haul truck drivers. She will conduct the four-year project in collaboration with the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute.



Kimberly Honn

Honn explained that drivers currently must be off duty for 10 consecutive hours after each duty period to allow for adequate rest. Those who use a sleeper berth have the option to split the off-duty time into two separate periods of eight and two hours, allowing for a longer sleep period supplemented with a short nap.

There are times, however, when it may be desirable to use a different split, for example six and four hours. Laboratory research suggests that split sleep schedules can provide as much rest as a single sleep period, regardless of how sleep is split. Honn's study will be the first to examine whether that premise holds in a real-world transportation setting.

The study will follow 200 long-haul truck drivers from the Blacksburg, Virginia, and Spokane areas. Drivers will wear sleep monitoring devices and complete smartphone-based fatigue tests at regular intervals. When tired, they may choose to use some of their required rest hours for a nap, which could potentially improve both safety and productivity.

"The results of this study will inform the discussion on whether drivers should be allowed more flexibility in how they schedule their off-duty hours," Honn said.

Nursing Team to Help Set New Anesthesia Safety Standards

A College of Nursing research team led by nurse anesthetist Darryl DuVall, D.N.P., will conduct a study that will help establish national practice standards to improve anesthesia safety during and after surgery. With a two-year, \$322,246 grant from pharmaceutical company Merck, the team will examine the use of neuromuscular blockade monitoring in surgeries performed at two Spokane hospitals: Sacred Heart Medical Center and Holy Family Hospital.



Darryl DuVall

Neuromuscular blocking agents are used to relax skeletal muscles to prevent muscle movement during surgery. Their effects are reversed post-surgery by administering reversal drugs, but timing is critical for those to work as intended. Neuromuscular blockade monitoring helps anesthesia providers determine when to administer the reversal drug and when full recovery has been reached, reducing the chances of complications such as respiratory problems. Yet, previous studies suggest that as many as 10 percent of providers never use monitoring, said DuVall, a clinical associate professor and the director of the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program.

The team will analyze data from an estimated 27,000 medical records from 2015 to determine monitoring rates in surgeries involving neuromuscular blockade. Based on their findings, they will conduct a practice change intervention and determine its effectiveness at improving monitoring rates, based on another set of data collected over the following six months.

Their study outcomes will be put to immediate good use in another aspect of the project. "We will be collaborating with the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists to develop practice standards for neuromuscular blockade monitoring, which aren't currently in place," DuVall said. "It's great for patients."

New Center to Study Natural Product-Drug Interactions

A collaboration of researchers at WSU, the University of Washington, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is leading a project to advance scientific knowledge on potential interactions between natural products and commonly used drugs. The multidisciplinary team has been awarded a five-year, \$10 million grant from NIH's National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health to establish a Center of Excellence on Natural Product-Drug Interactions Research.



Maryl Paine

Because natural products, such as green tea and St. John's wort, aren't regulated like drugs, pharmaceutical companies are not required to look at them to see whether they might interact negatively with new or existing drugs. So researchers like Mary Paine, Ph.D., an associate professor in the College of Pharmacy, have taken up the cause, which is complicated by the variable chemical makeup of natural products.

"When we study drugs, we know exactly what is in each tablet or capsule, but that's not always the case with natural products," Paine said. "This makes it challenging to compare research data between different labs."

Paine co-leads the project with University of Washington colleague Danny Shen. Key goals for the new center include establishing best practices for studying natural product-drug interactions; identifying existing gaps in knowledge; and selecting and investigating four to six natural products that may interact with conventional medications. With help from WSU's Murrow College of Communication, they will also develop an online database to disseminate findings to other researchers, health care providers, and the public. ■

Pharmacy Students Continue Tradition of

National Leadership

By Lori Maricle

WSU student pharmacists at the Midyear American Society of Health-System Pharmacists convention in Anaheim, CA.



Leadership opportunities are built into the doctor of pharmacy program at WSU Spokane, some on campus in one of many pharmacy organizations, and others in the national arena where faculty have roles and contacts.

Juliet Nguyen, U.S. Pharmacopeial



Juliet Nguyen

Second-year student Juliet Nguyen was appointed in January to serve a five-year term on the U.S. Pharmacopeial (USP) Convention's Health Literacy Expert Panel.

The panel provides additional expertise to the USP's Healthcare Quality Expert Committee, which develops and revises health care quality standards related to the use of medications in the U.S.

"As a member of the expert panel, I am looking forward to contributing to the

creation of evidence-based public health standards that are far reaching and make a difference in the lives of patients on a national level," Nguyen said.

College of Pharmacy's Associate Dean Danial Baker is currently a member of the Healthcare Quality Expert Committee.

As a pharmacist, Nguyen wants to work in a field where she can make an impact both locally and nationally, but has not chosen a specialty yet.

"I was immediately drawn to the health literacy panel," said Nguyen. "Prior to pharmacy school, I recruited low health literacy patients to modify USP pictograms using a real-time graphic artist. With my prior experience with health literacy, clinical trials, pharmacy, and the USP, I felt I could make significant contributions to the panel."

Kimberly Paulson, National Community Pharmacists Association



Kimberly Paulson

Kimberly Paulson, a student pharmacist in her third year at WSU Spokane, was appointed to a two-year term on the Student Leadership Council for the National

Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA). The College of Pharmacy has sent eight students to serve in this national leadership role in the last seven years, including two who served as president of the council.

"The goal of the council is to support the development of future leaders in community pharmacy and to recognize student pharmacists who have a strong interest in entrepreneurship and pursuing a career in community pharmacy," Paulson said. Over the next two years she will be representing student chapters in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington.

“The experience that I am most looking forward to is the compounding steering committee. I have found it an honor to be the only student pharmacist to sit on this board of influential pharmacists who are experts on this topic,” Paulson said.

The committee addresses issues relating to the practice of pharmacy compounding, including the right of pharmacists to compound drugs, legal and legislative concerns, and guidance and education to enhance the practice of furnishing medications to patients with special needs.

Once Paulson has obtained her doctor of pharmacy degree, she plans to pursue a post-graduate residency specializing in community pharmacy in order to gain experience to further her goal of owning her own independent pharmacy.

Erin McCarthy, Intern for Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers



Third-year student Erin McCarthy is passionate about health care policy.

As a result of connections through the College of Pharmacy, McCarthy landed a summer internship

with Washington Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers where she helped the Congresswoman’s health care subcommittee collect and compile information on the key health care concerns and goals discussed during the Congresswoman’s constituent meetings.

McCarthy represented the Millennial Republican Task Force for the Congresswoman’s office. The task force developed and implemented creative ideas to bridge generational gaps and better communicate health care policy to millennials. The team’s initiatives included events to educate college-aged students on the basics of insurance programs and seminars on informed decision-making skills.

McCarthy has been active in advocacy across both the state and the nation. In February she accompanied pharmacy colleagues from WSU and the Washington State Pharmacy Association to meet with state legislators in Olympia, and has been on several trips to Washington, D.C., for both leadership and advocacy meetings through the American Pharmacists Association, of which she is a member of the WSU student chapter.

“There is much more to being a pharmacist than passing your North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination, and filling out a license application. To be a pharmacist is to be a leader. WSU College of Pharmacy really strives to cultivate quality leaders and professionals,” McCarthy said.

As a pharmacist, McCarthy plans to work in a hospital and is interested in focusing on operating room pharmacy. She is in the College of Pharmacy Student Ambassador Program, the Kappa Psi Beta Pi pharmaceutical fraternity, the WSU Professional Pharmacy Student Organization, and the American Society of Health System Pharmacists.

“I definitely have a huge passion for policy and advocating for our patients and the profession. I see myself always being active in the political field,” McCarthy said. “I look forward to making a difference in the profession of pharmacy and meeting so many inspiring and exciting people.”

Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Student Lobbies Washington on NIH Funding



Kari Gaither

Institutes of Health budget.

Kari Gaither traveled to Washington, D.C., this spring as part of a group of 15 early-career scientists from across the U.S. advocating for continued growth in the National

Representing more than 14,000 students, medical residents, clinical and postdoctoral fellows that make up the associate membership of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), Gaither shared her thoughts with legislators at the inaugural “Early-Career Hill Day” about what is needed to fully reverse the effects of more than a decade of stagnant funding for scientific research.

“The success rates for NIH grants is abysmal and the resulting atmosphere is stifling,” she said.

Gaither believes it is so difficult to secure funding and establish a career in research that many people leave the field for more lucrative and/or less demanding career choices.

“This is a major reason that the progress in cancer research has been so slow over the last 40 years,” she said. “Cancer is one of the biggest challenges of the millennium. We need more funding overall in cancer research to allow for innovation and translation of basic research to clinical results, and to strengthen America’s place in the health sciences.”

Gaither is currently completing her Ph.D. in pharmaceutical sciences. She is one of two founding members of a WSU chapter of the Association of Women in Science, started in Spokane more than a year ago.

“There’s still so much we don’t know and we need to continue to gain knowledge,” she said. “This early-career investigators program is important to promote why we need a sustained increase in NIH funding—to continue to have growth in progress in the cancer research field. I have always had a love of science and wanted to become a research scientist in order to improve the human condition.”

Gaither is a National Science Foundation graduate research fellow and is working in the research lab of Assistant Professor David Liu, studying a specific protein called ATF5 and its role in the progression of breast cancer. Gaither is hoping her research will result in novel ways this protein can be targeted in certain cancer cells for treatment. ■

Campus Life



Go Cougs!



Mark Mansfield

Leading University District's Transformation

By Kevin Dudley

What's next for Spokane's

University District? Will it be the hub of innovation, collaboration and higher education for the region?

Mark Mansfield envisions it will.



Mark Mansfield

In 2015, Mansfield was back in Spokane visiting his parents. He had been living in Oslo, Norway, for 12 years and during his visit to his hometown, he got word that Spokane's University District was looking for its first executive director.

His visit to Spokane ended up being longer than expected and on June 15, 2015, the Downtown Spokane Partnership announced that Mansfield

would be the U-District's executive director.

"Here you have everybody around the table and they've already been working together for a long time to find a way to serve the associated interests of all these universities and the collective interests on the community," Mansfield said of the job's attraction. "There's the vision, there's political will and there's this interest in transforming Spokane."

Mansfield has experience in the field of architecture, historic preservation and e-commerce. He holds a Ph.D. in architecture, a master's degree from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard, an M.B.A. from the University of Washington, and a bachelor's degree in communication from the University of Puget Sound.

His biography seems to highlight his diverse interests, but that's not how he sees it.

"I see it as having one interest: this intersection of business and architecture development," he said. "It's architecture as a facet of culture, and that is a multi-faceted interest that needs an integrated solution and approach."

It's this viewpoint that drives his vision for the U-District.

The district has seen the Washington State University Spokane campus grow into a health sciences leader. Two housing projects are nearing completion, and Gonzaga recently opened its new Hemmingson Center. WSU Spokane is in the early stages of developing the Jensen-Byrd warehouse building site, and the U-District Gateway Pedestrian Bridge is on the horizon.

But Mansfield doesn't view those projects as simply pieces of development.

"There's this expectation to focus on the object, the aesthetics of the buildings we have in the city," he said. "And though those are great interests of mine, what's most transformative is what happens in those buildings."

He used the Hemmingson Center and the Jensen-Byrd project as prime examples.

"As different as those buildings are, they can be drawn together to the degree that both of these development projects are very much considering not just their

campus but the larger community that they're meant for," he said.

He also cited Toolbox, the business incubator that recently opened in the U-District.

"(Toolbox) is where you have the community coming together for entrepreneurship, for startups, for commercialization," Mansfield said. "You can experience the sparks of that environment."

One major initiative on the horizon for the U-District is the WSU medical school. What grabs the headlines in regards to that initiative is typically the increase in medical students in Spokane and around the state, as well as the potential for more research activity.

Mansfield looks one step further and points out that the potential for commercialized research could be the biggest benefit down the road. The fact that Spokane will have a WSU medical school and a UW medical education

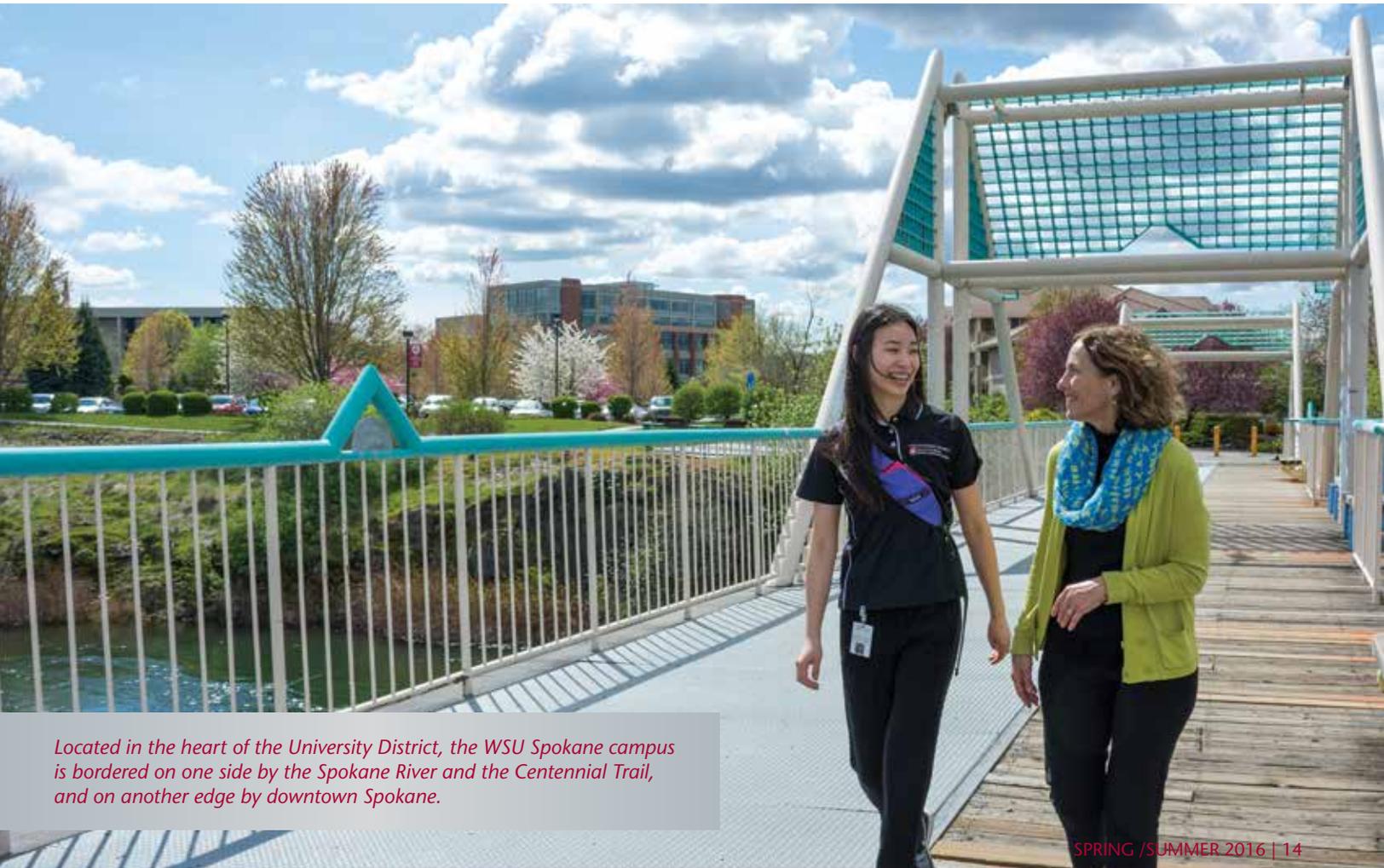
program opens up bigger markets for spinoff opportunities.

Mansfield takes a somewhat philosophical, yet practical, approach to leading the U-District. While much of the public sees the tangible developments in the district, Mansfield places more emphasis on the impact those developments can have on the community.

With this mindset, it's no wonder Spokane was recently selected by Envision America as one of 10 cities nationwide to deploy "Smart City" technologies to produce data to determine how to build our city. Spokane's U-District is the focal point for this initiative.

Spokane has changed since Mansfield last lived here, and the U-District could be the site for the next wave of change.

"The University District," Mansfield said, "is this opportunity to reconceive the city we want to live in." ■



Located in the heart of the University District, the WSU Spokane campus is bordered on one side by the Spokane River and the Centennial Trail, and on another edge by downtown Spokane.



HPA instructor Anna Franklin, center, is the project coach and mentor for students Michelle Le, right, and Elyse Brokaw, left, on the Lean Six Sigma project to improve a process on campus.

Lean Initiative Serves Dual Purpose on Campus

By Sarah Schaub

A student-led “Lean” project is helping streamline campus operations at WSU Health Sciences Spokane while preparing graduate students for leadership roles in health care management.

“Lean” is a leadership approach used to engage all levels of employees to assist in the identification, reduction and/or elimination of waste within any process, regardless of the product or service provided. Waste can exist in the form of

defects, waiting, overproduction, poor use of effort and talent, excess inventory, and unnecessary transportation or motion. Improvements typically result in improving quality, cost, safety, lead-time, and employee morale.

“Coming from a background in leadership and legislation, Lean principles in government have always interested me,” said WSU Spokane Chancellor Lisa Brown. “When I joined WSU and was introduced to our HPA Lean Six Sigma program, I realized we had a great opportunity to make campus improvements and to have our students lead the work. What a win to create efficiencies while giving students a real issue to solve using their education.”

Brown suggested the implementation of a student-led Lean initiative on campus to her leadership team in December 2015. Jae Kennedy, Ph.D., Health Policy & Administration (HPA) department chair, presented the opportunity to his students and Michelle Le and Elyse Brokaw quickly signed on for the project.

Le began by presenting an overview of Lean, how it is used, and how effective it can be to campus leadership. After completing a needs assessment of campus operations, the group chose to focus on Facilities Operations, a large, multi-unit department with a growing workload and numerous opportunities to streamline processes.

“One major obstacle faced by the Facilities team is managing campus requests,” Le said. “It’s a challenge because they receive these requests across multiple platforms. Requests can vary too. Some are urgent, like addressing a security threat,

while others are timely, such as building maintenance or grounds upkeep.”

Currently, work requests are made through the Facilities website, in-person, through personal email, by phone, and via radio calls. At times, this process has led to extended wait times for customers, missed or duplicate requests, and wasted time because of multiple work interruptions. After going through the Lean process, it was determined that campus requests would be made online through the website, where the data would be logged and tracked through project completion.

“The expected outcomes of this project are to increase efficiency, reduce time delays due to redundancy, increase requests made through the website, and increase documentation,” Le said.

“Ultimately, our goal is to better serve the needs of the campus community,” said Jon Schad, director of Facilities Operations. “This process is helping us make improvements and acknowledge the great work of our staff, while using technology to better define and measure the continuous process improvement that is necessary for a growing campus.”

Le and Brokaw, both in their final semester of their master’s program, have each earned their Lean Six Sigma Black Belt certification as part of the online HPA certificate program at WSU Spokane. Anna Franklin, HPA Lean Six Sigma instructor,

is their project coach and mentor.

They meet regularly to discuss the progress of the project and at the end of the semester they will provide a sustainability plan that will serve as a continuous quality improvement guide for the Facilities Operations department.

Instructor Franklin is interested in making Lean projects on campus part of the student curriculum for the online Lean certificate program.

“I would like to revisit our strategy once a year and identify areas of opportunity with a strategic mindset,” Franklin said. “When classes begin students would have a list of pre-identified projects to select from. They would then facilitate the project with continuous involvement of impacted departments and stakeholders. This would allow the students to immediately apply Lean concepts and tools learned in class. It would be great career training while helping us strive toward continuous quality improvement on campus.”

Brown supports Franklin’s vision and hopes this project is just the beginning.

“I would love to make that the standard,” she said. “I hope this initiative inspires us to stay on the path of continuous quality improvement. With all of the change and growth on our campus, I see a unique opportunity for us to establish new benchmarks.” ■



Washington Governors Push Lean Principles

Process improvement and the need to apply Lean principles to government operations has been a hot topic in Washington state legislation since the 1990s. Former Governor Christine Gregoire was the first to mandate the use of Lean principles in government agencies in 2011, followed by Governor Jay Inslee’s executive order in 2013. Inslee’s order created Results Washington, a reform plan that calls for a more effective and efficient state government, better schools, and a stronger economy. Since the plan launched, government agencies have been asked to self-identify areas needing process improvement and to report on how Lean principles can be used to address them.

Anticipation Builds for Opening of New Teaching Clinic

By Lorraine Nelson

What is a medical resident?

A new physician who has graduated with a medical degree but now must spend at least three years as a medical resident in on-the-job training.

Why is the Spokane Teaching Health Clinic important to medical residencies?

More medical residents are needed in eastern Washington. Federal money became available for residents, but was earmarked for teaching health centers only, so the Spokane Teaching Health Center was created in 2013. It is now the sponsoring institution in Spokane for most residencies (Providence has retained sponsorship of residencies in radiology and psychiatry).

What medical residencies will be at the STHC initially?

- Family medicine: 30
- Internal medicine: 30
- Family medicine, rural track: 2
- Psychiatry: 6
- Sports Medicine Fellowship: 1

The new Spokane Teaching Health Clinic

is creating excitement for the students and professors in health sciences programs on the WSU Spokane and Eastern Washington University Spokane campus.



Meryl Gersh

"It's huge," is how Meryl Gersh summarized it. Gersh, Ph.D., P.T., is the chair of EWU's doctor of physical therapy program, which is located on the Spokane campus.

"Right now our students do not get to fully apply their skills until they reach their third year of the program which is comprised of 35 weeks of full-time clinical internships," Gersh said. "We can use the new clinic to help the students integrate the academics and the basic skills earlier in the program. For example, they may be learning about shoulder injuries and be able to go to the clinic to observe a patient with a shoulder injury being examined by the physical therapist working there."

Sarah Fincham, D.N.P., A.R.N.P., was a nurse practitioner for almost nine years before joining the WSU nursing faculty in fall 2015. She is hoping to be assigned to work with students and patients at the new clinic.



Sarah Fincham

“Everyone is excited about collaborating in these teams,” Fincham said. “There aren’t too many universities where this is happening.”

The clinic will expose students in the family nurse practitioner program to patients of all ages, including children, pregnant women, adults and geriatric patients, which is a great opportunity to see a variety of patients in a single clinic setting.

“It’s going to allow the students to see across the life span and help them develop the skills they will need to care for a variety of patients, including those with multiple chronic illnesses,” Fincham said.

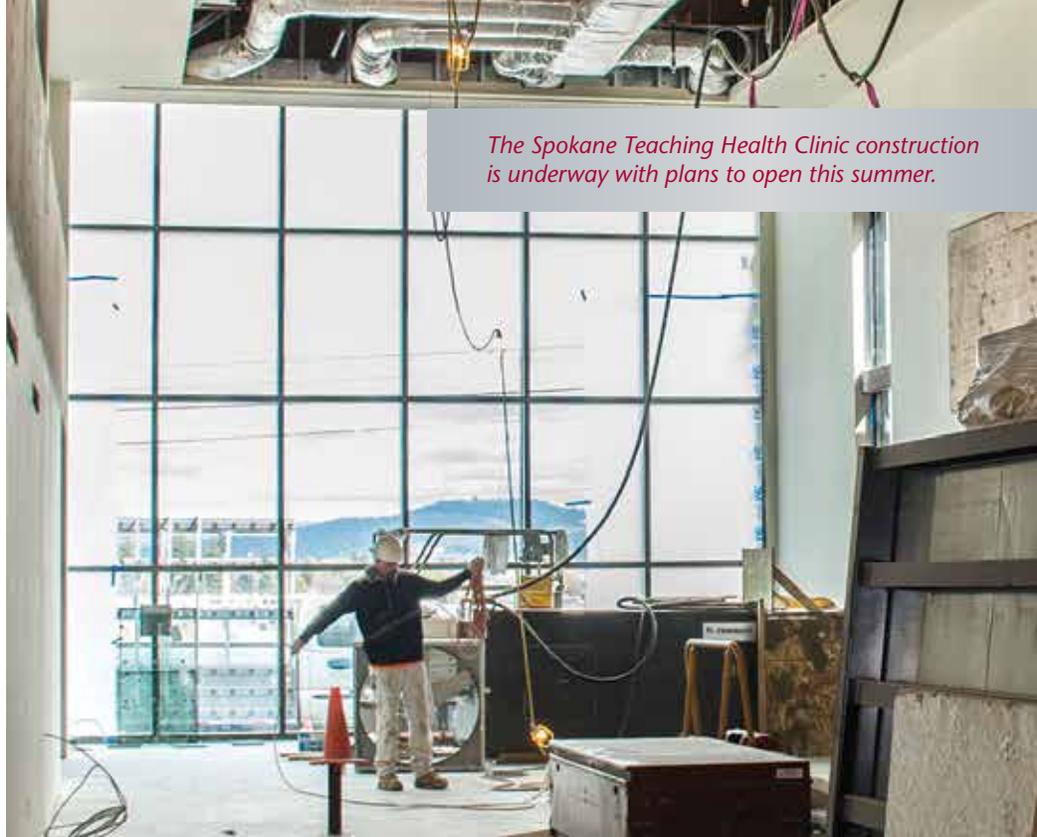
The clinic is a result of a consortium formed by Providence Health Care, Empire Health Foundation and WSU Spokane. Construction was financed with revenue bonds issued by WSU. Once it is finished, Providence will move its medical residency clinic from the Fifth and Browne Medical Building clinic to the new clinic. Last year, the Providence clinic served about 35,000 patients. The new clinic expects to serve many of the same patients, as well as students and employees on campus and others in the community.

“The interprofessional focus of this clinic will benefit the patients who choose us for their primary needs,” said Traci Couture, STHC operations director. “They will have access to not only physicians, but nurse practitioners, pharmacists, social workers, physical therapists and occupational therapists.”

Faculty representatives of all the major programs on campus have been talking about how best to organize the clinic to emphasize interprofessional education for the students, and team-based care for the patients.

Nursing, pharmacy, physical therapy and occupational therapy programs on campus also see the clinic as a steady, reliable site for some of the clinical rotations required of their students prior to graduation.

“We are still discussing how the work will flow among the teams,” said Fincham. “This will be a great opportunity for health care professionals from different disciplines to come together in a single clinic and collaborate to improve patient care.” ■



The Spokane Teaching Health Clinic construction is underway with plans to open this summer.

History

DECEMBER 2013: Providence Health Care, Empire Health Foundation and WSU Health Sciences Spokane form a consortium to create the Spokane Teaching Health Center (STHC)

JULY 2014: First class of six new medical residents begin work because of the STHC, raising the total number of Spokane residents from 74 to 80

SEPTEMBER 2014: WSU Board of Regents approves \$16.2 million in general revenue bonds to finance clinic construction

JULY 2015: Nine more new medical residents begin work because of the STHC

JULY 2016: Ten more new medical residents will begin, for a total of 25 positions added in three years

AUGUST 2016: Expected opening

Clinic Fast Facts

- Clinic will model interprofessional primary care
- \$16 million to construct
- Construction financed with WSU revenue bonds
- 42,000 square feet
- Two-story
- 56 exam rooms
- On WSU Spokane’s campus
- Providence’s Medical Residency Clinic at Fifth and Browne will be moved to the STHC
- WSU faculty in medicine, nursing, and pharmacy will use the clinic for teaching students
- EWU faculty in physical therapy, occupational therapy, and social work also will use the clinic for teaching



Dr. Samuel Selinger, a retired cardiovascular surgeon, is dedicated to helping others as a Prescription Assistance Network activist and volunteer.

Research Shows

Prescription Assistance Reduces Trips to Hospital

By Lorraine Nelson

The research study group was small, but it demonstrated what Dr. Samuel Selinger figured it would:

If you help low-income patients obtain free or low-cost prescription medications consistently, their visits to the emergency room and admissions to the hospital decrease.

“The research findings confirm that we’ve graduated from a do-good program into something that is bringing health care resources into the community and that is having a positive impact on the health of the community,” said Selinger, a retired Spokane physician.

He estimates the Spokane Prescription Assistance Network (SPAN)—the Spokane arm of a statewide foundation—has brought \$14 million in prescription medications to Spokane residents since it opened in 2008.

“The current return on investment is 18

to 1,” Selinger said. “For every dollar of support it receives, SPAN brings into the community \$18 of pharmaceuticals from national companies.”

There is no way to quantify the impact on human lives.

“We hear stories from our clients that we’ve helped them stay out of the hospital, or we’ve helped them put food on their table because they couldn’t pay for medications and food both, or their health has stabilized now and they can return to work,” said Kelly Armstrong, a social worker and executive director of SPAN and its



Kelly Armstrong

network of clinics in Washington cities, known collectively as the Prescription Drug Assistance Foundation.

“We know we’re making a difference,” Armstrong said. “We have patients return year after year and they call us when they need refills.”

Selinger and others who organized and started the prescription assistance program looked ahead to a day when they would want to study its results, so they began collecting information from patients almost from the start.



Mason Burley

“It’s a good research study from a number of perspectives,” said Mason Burley, the Ph.D. student at WSU Spokane who was lead author on the research study

paper published in April in the Journal of Managed Care Pharmacy. WSU Spokane faculty from nursing, pharmacy and medicine were collaborating authors, as was Selinger.

“Two aspects of the study in particular made it strong,” Burley said.

First, the patients were followed for two years, and second, the patients were given a questionnaire when they arrived. Follow-up was done at six-month intervals.

In addition, to mitigate self-reporting errors, hospital and emergency room records were accessed, he noted.

Their research showed a decrease in hospitalizations and ER visits for the study’s 310 patients as a group, with those receiving pulmonary medications showing the largest drop. Not all the patients experienced such a decrease in acute care incidents, however. Those who were taking psychotropic medications had increased acute care contacts, as did those in the young adult age group 18 – 24.

The study lacked a control group, which would have been nice to have for comparison, said Burley, who is working on a doctorate in interdisciplinary studies.

The study authors also noted other limitations of the project that could be expanded upon in the future, such as the patients being from a single geographic region.

The research paper is not the only connection between the prescription program and WSU Spokane. Selinger credits Chancellor Lisa Brown, who was the state Senate majority leader in 2005 when he and others approached the legislature, with getting legislation passed to create the nonprofit Prescription Drug Assistance Foundation.

Brown was among the first people Selinger contacted with the news about the research paper’s publication.

“I am impressed with Dr. Selinger’s continued dedication to this foundation,” Brown said, “and I am not surprised the research shows that this organization is improving the quality of life for those it serves.”

The foundation returned to the legislature last year and received

authorization to help a broader group of people. With the federal Affordable Care Act in place, many of the low-income uninsured are now insured, so the income level was increased and the clientele expanded, Armstrong explains.

A number of new programs offering free and lower-cost access to medications also are now available. Before the ACA, the foundation worked mostly with pharmaceutical companies, but now there are other nonprofit organizations, including some associated with specific diseases such as the American Lung Association, that offer help with medications related to pulmonary conditions.

**“I was naïve as a doctor,”
Selinger said. “I was
a surgeon and gave
prescriptions after surgery
and assumed the patient
got the medicine.”**

Although Armstrong serves as executive director of the statewide network, she also works directly with patients at the clinics held at various locations in Spokane. Another part of her job is fundraising. The clinic space is provided free in each community where the foundation operates, often by a hospital. Armstrong makes use of Americorps volunteers and receives help for the Yakima clinics from the Yakima Valley Farmworkers Clinic. She also writes grants.

The prescription assistance program actually grew out of a larger project Selinger initiated to combine the charity care offered by Spokane’s physicians so it could be distributed where needed throughout the greater Spokane region.

That was Project Access – an idea Selinger picked up from a one-week health care course at the Kennedy School of Government in 2000 shortly after he semi-retired. He enlisted the help of the Spokane County Medical Society, which called for physicians to pool their charity care. Almost

immediately, about 100 doctors signed on (that has since grown to about 600). Providence Health took on the role of coordinating Project Access.

Once it was up and running, organizers realized the charity care patients needed access to prescription medication.

“I was naïve as a doctor,” Selinger said. “I was a surgeon and gave prescriptions after surgery and assumed the patient got the medicine. It wasn’t until I got into this nonprofit organization that I realized there is a gap between prescribing medications and compliance by the patient, either because they cannot afford the medication or there is no one to get it for them or help them remember to take it.”

The volunteers driving Project Access analyzed their options, which were to buy and store medications, or to work directly with pharmaceutical companies because they all have programs offering free and reduced-price medicines to eligible populations.

They opted to work with the companies, but agreed upon a need to have a patient prescription coordinator help the patients through the process.

That’s when they went to state legislators and got legislation in 2005 to authorize creation of the nonprofit foundation.

In addition to Spokane, clinics are also now located in Seattle, Everett, Lynnwood, Edmonds, Shelton, Yakima, Toppenish, Grandview and Colfax.

Providence Health Care has been the major funder of the Spokane arm of the foundation.

Selinger was board chair of the fund for years until he could no longer serve because of term limits for the position. He has since continued as a volunteer.

“Now that we have this paper which answers some questions about the impact of this program and shows we are successful, I am hoping to give the reins to this project over to the next generation and say ‘Here’s this wonderful project that you can grow, and because it is such a unique collaboration among so many different segments of the community, we can be models and leaders for others.’” ■



STCU

‘Here for Good’

By Terren Roloff

STCU CEO Tom Johnson

“Here for good” is a statement of purpose for STCU, defining its relationship to credit union members, and their communities.

It also speaks to the permanence of a credit union that was founded during the Great Depression.

“STCU has for many years been an extremely generous supporter of higher education in general and WSU Spokane in particular,” said Nancy Fike, director of Development for the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

The credit union’s efforts will be recognized this fall at the WSU Foundation gala in Pullman.

Tom Johnson, CEO of STCU, says education is in the credit union’s DNA. Although membership is open to anyone in Washington or North Idaho, the credit union was founded

by a small group of Spokane teachers.

“Our original connection to WSU Spokane was the training for K-12 educators that occurs on campus,” he said.

As the campus has grown, so too has STCU’s commitment to it. The credit union sponsors a wide variety of student orientation activities, including the popular scavenger hunt during new student orientation each August.

STCU sponsorships for the College of Pharmacy include lunches for doctor of pharmacy students who attend career presentations each semester.

“The speakers we bring in provide a vision about how the profession is changing and



evolving,” said Sue Lutz of Advancement and Development. “Our hope is that these discussions will lay the foundation for our student pharmacists to think about their opportunities to change the practice and become leaders. Having lunches provided is an additional incentive for our students to attend.”

STCU also provides sponsorship dollars toward Pharmacy Dean Gary Pollack’s annual welcome back BBQ each August.

For the College of Nursing, STCU-sponsored activities include welcome luncheons for incoming nursing students, faculty/staff professional development activities, and the Na-ha-shnee Camp financial literacy day for Native students. This past year the credit union helped fund the college’s inaugural doctor of nursing practice white coat ceremony.

STCU’s most recent gift is \$50,000 to the Spokane Teaching Health Clinic under construction on the WSU Spokane campus.

The primary care clinic will provide care from medical residents working alongside health sciences students from WSU and Eastern Washington University. Construction began in spring 2015, with the clinic expected to start serving patients in fall 2016.

STCU’s donation earned it naming rights for a community education room that can also serve as two classrooms.

“We saw the effort of the three partners of the Spokane Teaching Health Center (Empire Health Foundation, Providence Health Care and WSU Spokane) to work together,” Johnson noted.

That effort impressed the credit union’s leadership. When WSU decided to build a

clinic across the street from STCU’s Schade Tower branch, the credit union knew it wanted to be involved.

STCU’s involvement in the clinic impressed WSU as well. “The community education room is a fitting connection given STCU’s longtime interest in both education and community,” said Fike.

There are other connections between the largest consumer-based financial institution in the region and WSU Spokane, not the least of which is the growth of both.

STCU and WSU Spokane are working together to make the campus and Spokane’s University District a great place to live, work and play. STCU is doing its part by being “here for good” each day. ■

IGNITE

NORTHWEST

WSU
Innovation Center
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Ignite Northwest Propels Entrepreneurs

By Kevin Dudley

The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Spokane now has a business accelerator that helps established businesses find investors: Ignite Northwest.

When the state created the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute (SIRTI) in 1994, its aim was to help startup technology businesses and match them with university researchers to grow high tech jobs.

SIRTI eventually merged with another state-funded enterprise—the Washington Technology Center—to become Innovate Washington, which started with a primary focus on clean technology.

When Innovate Washington’s funding ran out in 2013, the state turned its building over to WSU Spokane.

This left Spokane without a solid business accelerator until 2015, when Ignite Northwest formed. WSU Spokane is one of Ignite’s partners and Ignite has space in the WSU Innovation Center on campus.

Ignite manages two 13-week accelerator classes a year with cohorts of at least 10 companies in each class. The classes introduce entrepreneurs to the aspects of running a business, from developing a business model, to market research, communication with their markets and customers, and more.

“In essence, it’s a compressed executive MBA course with an eye toward creating a compelling story to investors in an effort to gain capital for scale and growth,” said Bill Savitz, Ignite’s CEO.



Bill Savitz

The classes conclude with Demo Day, where each company presents its organization to an audience of potential investors, customers and other entrepreneurs.

“The purpose is to prepare the client companies for presentations to potential investors as well as to help them hone their presentation skills for all efforts related to selling themselves and their products to broad audiences of potentially interested parties,” Savitz said.

As of this writing, Ignite is currently wrapping up its second 13-week class. The first cohort graduated in November of 2015 and some businesses made some major changes.

Two of the 10 participating companies made changes to their executive leadership, while two others moved their products to different markets. Two more businesses found investors.

For its second cohort, Ignite extended its reach by partnering with Fuse SPC in the Tri-Cities to allow for remote participation in the class. Fuse SPC offers coworking space in the Tri-Cities.

Ignite’s list of advisors for the classes reads like a “Who’s who” of area entrepreneurs and business owners. Some of them include John Overby, a local entrepreneur, Mark Pond of the Spokane Public Library, Ed Caferro of Ecolite Manufacturing, Lewis Lee of Lee & Hayes, Pete Chase of Purcell Systems, Michelle Hege of Desautel Hege, and many others.

It’s that diverse group of entrepreneurs and business owners that sets Ignite apart from previous attempts to grow Spokane’s entrepreneurial ideas.

“Our predecessor organizations provided individual coaching and advice from our business consultants in a one-on-one platform,” Savitz said. “The client base was very early stage, maybe just at an idea-level but not in an organized programmatic manner.”

Ignite serves as the convener for entrepreneurs and investors. Being located in Spokane’s University District and partnering with WSU Spokane provides connections and access to researchers.

Iasis Molecular Sciences, InstantMD and ReliantRX are some of the health sciences-related companies that have completed Ignite’s 13-week class. Research on the WSU Spokane campus could provide partnerships and solutions that can help those companies grow their business.

And it’s turning research into commercialized businesses that makes WSU Spokane and the University District the job creators they are touted as being. ■



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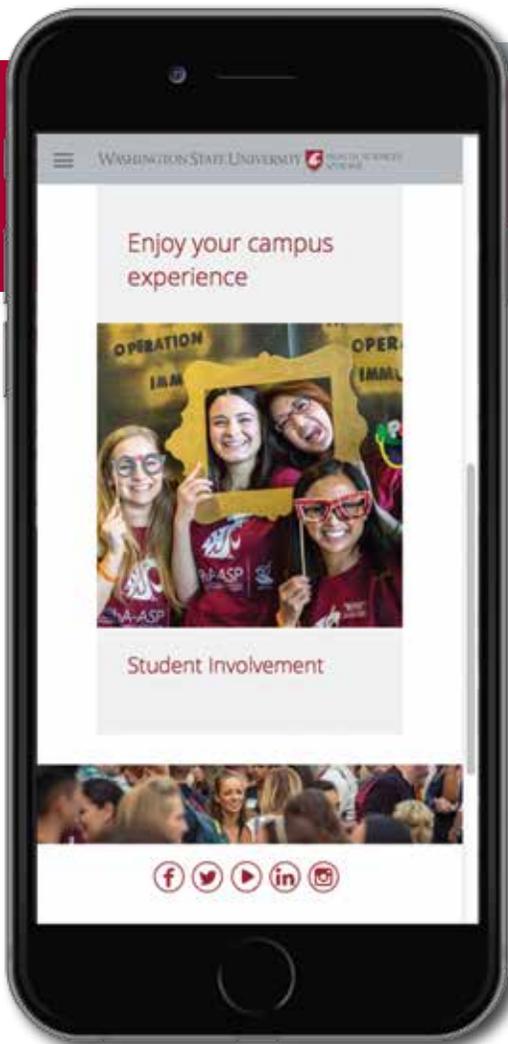
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Coming Soon:

Spokane Teaching Health Clinic
on the WSU Spokane Campus



The Spokane Teaching Health Clinic is scheduled to open this summer. Pictured is Robert Eggart, project manager for WSU Spokane. Read more about the clinic inside. For information on naming opportunities, contact Nancy Fike, director of Development for the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine at nancy.fike@wsu.edu or (509) 358-7616.