A Word from the Assistant Dean:

In this issue we are highlighting activities of our Rural Scholars. The students have been very active and dedicated to the additional coursework. The number of scholars has grown to 18 first year students, all of whom are advancing toward their second year. Interest in our MPH option is strong and we anticipate applications soon. I will be traveling to Kansas and Wisconsin this semester to participate in the Rural Medical Educators and Rural Training Track collaborative meetings. Brainstorming and collaborating with other rural educators fosters new and innovative thinking. We will continue to do what we can to advocate for rural health. I urge anyone reading this to support initiatives necessary to keep rural hospitals, rural health care workforce, and rural public health strong. As more rural Texans acquire health insurance, we need to provide a strong rural health system.

Our graduated Rural Scholars (Classes of 2010-2014) number 45. Of those 45, 14 are in active practice (31 still in residency training). Of the 14 in practice, 7 (50 %) are practicing in either a MUA or HPSA designated location. Three of eleven in our first graduating class of 2010 are in practice in rural Texas and are already a part of our rural adjunct faculty. I am extremely proud of our current and former Rural Scholars. The credit goes to our rural faculty who train them and the staff of the Office of Rural Medical Education at TCOM that keeps the wagon wheels rolling.

Keeping the trail for Rural Medical Education passable, we ride on.

John R. Bowling, DO, FACOFP, dist.
Assistant Dean of Rural Medical Education
Office of Rural Medical Education

RURAL TEACHING PHYSICIANS

The cornerstone of the Rural Medical Education Program has been the Family Physicians in rural sites throughout Texas who serve as Adjunct Faculty for our student doctors. They work with an assigned student over the course of four years and welcome them not only into their practice but often into their homes. Students benefit from seeing a rural clinic in real time and experience first-hand the lifestyle that a smaller community fosters. Dr. John Bowling designed the program this way so students could be immersed regularly throughout medical school in a full scale rural experience.

These teaching physicians don’t get paid, they don’t receive any awards or recognition and many have participated in “raising” 10+ student doctors. There are those too that have one student doctor from all 4 years of the current Rural Scholar roster. The physicians take pride in providing valuable learning experiences and contributing to the future of the osteopathic profession.

For example, Dr. Robert DeLuca in Eastland, Texas has been taking students since the program began in 1996.

He currently has 4 students – one from each medical school class! He always has a student at his hip and most describe him as a natural educator. “He has a white board in every exam room and frequently takes time to educate his patient and the student,” says YR3 Rural Scholar Christopher Rhodes.

We would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution made by our Adjunct Faculty and hope you are as impressed as we are with their willingness to share their wisdom.

One of the most rewarding qualities of their longevity is that their former students are now practicing in rural communities in Texas. Dr. Robert DeLuca’s former student, Jim Bob Qualls, DO is now practicing family medicine in Athens, Texas. Chad Weldon, DO is Dr. Jeffrey Hutchins’s former student and is now practicing in Granbury, Texas. This impressive lineage makes the work of raising rural physicians most fulfilling.

Several other rural family physicians have entered our ranks recently:

- Dr. William Crowley – Port Lavaca, Texas
- Dr. Janelle House – Rockdale, Texas
- Dr. Jim Bob Qualls – Athens, Texas (former Rural Scholar)
- Dr. Chad Weldon – Granbury, Texas (former Rural Scholar)

As increasing numbers of women enter medical school, requests for female faculty escalates. We are delighted to be finding more female physicians to serve as role models for our women student doctors.

AGROMEDICINE SPECIALIZED TRAINING

Class of 2017 and 2018 Rural Scholars participated in the Agromedicine program offered at the Texas Rural Health Association meeting in Fort Worth on November 17 & 18, 2014. The University of Texas Health Northeast presented this two day, seven-hour agricultural medicine training program. Content for this program will be delivered over two years during the Texas Rural Health Association Annual Conference. Hundreds of rural physicians, nurses, veterinarians, healthcare professionals, health educators, and medical students/residents have received this premier educational experience over the last 40 years. Originally developed by Iowa’s Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH), the curriculum has been adapted to reflect the distinct essence of rural Texas and is taught by regional faculty, as well as the program’s pioneer, Dr. Kelley Donham. The objective of this program is to train a broad array of health care providers with the basics of anticipation, recognition, diagnosis, treatment, and most importantly, the prevention of occupational and environmental illnesses and injuries within Texas rural and agricultural communities.
First year Rural Scholars traveled to Eastland, Texas for an Occupational Medicine field trip. This event is designed to provide first hand knowledge of rural community work life and how the local physicians support employees and employers. This year students went to the EBAA Iron Inc., a family owned and operated company of 250 employees. EBAA manufactures and sells pipe restraints and flexible expansion joints for the water and wastewater pipeline industry. Students observed the company’s employees in action and gathered important information about how rural physicians are called to help.

YR4 Student Doctor Hollie Rose was given the Rural Health Student Award at this year’s Texas Rural Health Association Conference. Hollie moved to Plainview, Texas and completed many of her third and fourth year rotations there. She and her family quickly became part of the fabric of this rural community in west Texas. Bravo Hollie!
STUDENT LEADERS

Students enrolled in the Rural Scholars program commit to an additional 50 hours of activities on top of their generic medical school training. On rotations, they can be as far away as 12 hours from campus. This program is rigorous and an enormous commitment, yet several also serve as student leaders. Take a look at the multitude of ways in which some of our students lead.

YR1 José Peña – Leadership Council Senator and Class Curriculum Representative.
YR1 Jeremiah Duncan – Representative for Texas Rural Health Association and LGBT & Allies Association.
YR1 Bethany Dalby – Representative for the Wilderness Medicine Interest Group.
YR1 Chandler Sparks – President Elect SAAO (Student American Academy of Osteopathy) and President Elect SAMOPS (Student Association of Military Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeon), Orientation Leader and CAP Tutor.
YR1 Rachel Urbanczyk – President of ACOFP (American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians) Club and representative of the Palliative Care Organization.
YR1 Nikki Findlay – Treasurer of ACOFP, President of SOMA (Student Osteopathic Medical Association) and representative for Medical Public Health Initiative.
YR1 Robby Sanchez – Student Representative for the Psychiatry Club and Geriatrics Club.
YR1 Tim Takach – Zachary College President.
YR2 Kristyn Mathewson – VP of Texas Rural Health Association, Secretary of DOCARE.
YR2 Deepika Kaushal – Treasurer of Preventative Medicine Club.
YR2 Briana Money – President of the Texas Student Chapter of Texas Rural Health Association.
YR2 Melissa Vasquez – Chair of the Latin Medical Student Association.
YR3 Karen Duong – American Psychiatric Association Student Interest Group Network Region 5 Chairman.
YR3 Blayne Street – Founder and president of the Student Veterans Association.
YR3 Jessica Nu – Medical Student Government Association; Historian (2012 to Present).

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE RURAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM VISIT: www.unthsc.edu/RuralMed or contact us at 817-735-2275.