THANK YOU, LAS VEGAS

» Medical Education Evolves
» Our Strategic Plan
» Northern Nevada GME Growth
» Our Rural Presence
» Diversity and Inclusion
TO OUR Community Faculty FAMILY
YOU ARE VITAL TO OUR SUCCESS
You invite our students and residents into your practice because of your commitment to medical education. Because of your commitment to our learners, you’re changing their lives, so that one day, they will do the same for their patients. We see you, and your efforts, and we thank you.
With gratitude, UNR Med

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SYNAPSE
SPRING 2017 • VOL. 21 • NO. 1

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THANK YOU, LAS VEGAS

This issue of Synapse marks the end of a more than 20-year relationship between the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine and the faculty and staff members of its Las Vegas campus. The official transition of our Las Vegas campus to form the clinical platform for the UNLV School of Medicine occurs on July 1, 2017. After July 1, these outstanding educators will have ongoing faculty appointments with UNR Med, adjunct to their primary appointments with UNLV, providing UNR Med students continued benefit from their teaching. But the fundamental construct of UNR Med as the only public medical school with two widely-separated campuses will soon end.

While this change obviously has implications for creating a “new” school of medicine in Reno with a long tradition of excellence, I want to focus here on our great appreciation for our colleagues in Las Vegas, for all that they have done to make UNR Med successful, for the extraordinary teaching received by our students that has contributed so much to their success, and for the sense of loss we are experiencing as the transition date approaches.

The growth and success of UNR Med over the last two decades parallels the growth and success of our Las Vegas campus. Because of the transformation of public medical education supported by the Governor and the legislature, UNLV is the fortunate recipient of more than 100 dedicated faculty and nearly 300 residents and fellows, and the funding to support clinical and educational activities. This clinical and graduate medical education platform has provided a majority of the clinical teaching for our third- and fourth-year students and that teaching has been outstanding.

We receive feedback regularly about how well-prepared our students are as they transition to residency training. We hear from our graduates about how well-trained they feel compared to resident colleagues from more prestigious medical schools. The clinical teaching based at University Medical Center provides exposure for our students to patients and clinical pathology that are little seen in many teaching hospitals. I have been impressed from my first days here with how dedicated our faculty and staff members are to both our students and to caring for patients who often suffer from socioeconomic deprivation.

Our Las Vegas colleagues have set a high standard for clinical education that we are already matching in Reno and northern Nevada, according to the feedback and performance of the students on those rotations. We appreciate the standard that was set and believe it bodes well for the quality of medical education provided by both public medical schools.

You will read in this issue of Synapse about a wide range of teaching programs in Las Vegas that will continue into the future. A cohort of 20 third-year medical students will continue to receive their required clerkship teaching in Las Vegas during 2017-18. Fourth-year students will now and in the future continue to avail themselves of elective opportunities at UMC. We are developing a new, year-long integrated third-year clerkship at MountainView Hospital that will launch in 2018. We are building or expanding residency training in Reno in primary care internal medicine, psychiatry, geriatrics, and rural family medicine. Our plans for these and other major initiatives for UNR Med in the next three years are detailed in the new UNR Med Strategic Plan, outlined on pages 12-15.

All of these exciting new educational programs derive in one way or another from our strong base of educational excellence built in Las Vegas. I want to personally thank every single faculty and staff member for their contributions to this excellence, and wish them well in the next exciting phase of building public medical education in Nevada.

THOMAS L. SCHWENK, M.D.
Professor, Family and Community Medicine
Dean, University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine
Class of 2017 LEARNS RESIDENCY MATCH RESULTS

The ballroom of the Joe Crowley Student Union and the classrooms of the 1701 W. Charleston campus in Las Vegas were transformed into the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry as medical students from University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine opened their golden snitches to learn their residency matches.

Sixty-one students in the Class of 2017 matched with residency institutions in Nevada and across the nation, continuing the school’s long tradition of placing its students in competitive programs in the U.S.

By the numbers:
- 22 School of Medicine graduates, or 36 percent, will enter primary care specialties including internal medicine, pediatrics and family medicine.
- 21 students, or 34 percent of the Class of 2017, will remain in Nevada to complete their residency training.

Students from the Class of 2017 opened their golden snitches in Reno and Las Vegas to find out where they will complete their residency training. Photos by Anne McMillin, APR; Edgar Antonio Nunez and Alyssa Hill.

INTERNAL MEDICINE: 10
PSYCHIATRY: 9
GENERAL SURGERY: 8
FAMILY MEDICINE: 7
ANESTHESIOLOGY: 6
EMERGENCY MEDICINE: 5
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY: 3
PATHOLOGY: 3

PEDIATRICS: 3
MEDICINE-PEDIATRICS: 2
NEUROLOGY: 1
OB/GYN: 1
OPHTHALMOLOGY: 1
OTORLARYNGOLOGY: 1
RADIOLOGY: 1

Match results for the Class of 2017 may be found at: med.unr.edu/2017match
A newly-released report from the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine’s Office of Statewide Initiatives documents the diverse features of health and health care in rural and frontier counties of Nevada.

The *Nevada Rural and Frontier Health Data Book – Eighth Edition* contains a wide range of current information on the demography, population health, and the health care delivery system in rural and frontier regions of Nevada. It includes data relevant to public policy makers, health care professionals and administrators, rural health care advocates, and, importantly, the residents of rural and frontier Nevada.

**A few of the interesting findings in the report include:**

- In 2014, 17.3 percent of Nevadans under the age of 65 were uninsured, including 16.1 percent rural and frontier residents. Since 2008, the number of uninsured Nevadans under the age of 65 decreased by 112,883 or 21.3 percent - among rural and frontier counties, the number decreased 16,764 or 32.3 percent.

- Infant mortality and other birth outcomes are slightly better in urban versus rural areas of the state - these differences may be a product of better access to prenatal and preventive services in urban counties. For example, 61.9 percent of pregnant women in rural and frontier counties received prenatal care in the first trimester, as compared to 69.3 percent in Clark County and 70.4 percent in Washoe County.

- In 2016, there were 190 licensed psychiatrists in Nevada - 189 reside in urban Nevada and only one psychiatrist resides in a rural or frontier county. Since 2006, the number of psychiatrists in Nevada has increased by 38 or 25 percent, yet the per capita number of psychiatrists has only increased from 6.0 to 6.8 per 100,000 population.

- Between 2011 and 2016, Nevada Medicaid enrollment has increased by 272,060 or 73.8 percent, including enrollment growth of 17,469 (52.2 percent) in rural and frontier counties.
STATEWIDE PANEL DISCUSSES OPIOID EPIDEMIC

An overview of the opioid epidemic in the U.S. was presented by drug addiction experts in a free, public panel discussion in Las Vegas last October. The panel discussion, “Drugs in America Today,” was sponsored by The National Judicial College at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Discussion topics at the event included evidence-based treatment options for the courts and communities, efforts to limit the opioid epidemic, community-court relations and important lessons for addicts and their families.

Expert panelists on addiction included: Stacie Mathewson, founder and president of Transforming Youth Recovery; Melissa Piasecki, M.D., UNR Med; Sara Gordon, Esq. from the William S. Boyd School of Law; Bob Forrest, a recovery advocate and activist working in Los Angeles; and Dr. Stephanie Woodard of the Division of Public and Behavioral Health for the State of Nevada.

GME EXIT SURVEY FINDINGS

Selected key findings of the 2016 Graduate Medical Education Survey conducted by UNR Med’s Office of Statewide Initiatives include:

- In 2016, 40.7 percent of physicians completing residencies and fellowships in Nevada reported that they will remain in Nevada to begin clinical practice or continue their graduate medical education.
- Since 2007, 51.2 percent of exiting residents and fellows remained in Nevada.
- The average debt of all exiting residents and fellows in 2016 was $170,127.
- Average debt carried by physicians from Nevada since 2007 is $188,362, lower than the average debt of $199,964 carried by all physicians.

The Graduate Medical Education (GME) survey assesses the future employment and continuing educational plans of exiting residents and fellows.

PEDIATRICS STRUCTURE ESTABLISHED FOR RENO DEPARTMENT

Max Coppes, M.D., Ph.D., MBA, professor and Nell J. Redfield Chair of Pediatrics and Physician-in-Chief, Renown Children’s Hospital, rolled out a formal structure for the UNR Med Department of Pediatrics last fall.

Divisions include general pediatrics, neonatal intensive care, hospital medicine and behavioral health while sections are pediatric anesthesiology and imaging, critical care and emergency medicine, pediatric subspecialties and pediatric surgical subspecialties.

GIFT SUPPORTS ENDOWED PROGRAM

A generous gift from the estate of the late Lillian Gilbert will create an endowed research program in movement disorders at UNR Med. Her gift will support movement disorder research at the basic science and clinical levels. It will also create an endowed faculty position, the Harry and Lillian Gilbert Movement Disorders Endowed Chair, to focus on translational clinical research.

GIFT PROVIDES FOR STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Joanne Grundman (attended 1967-69) made provisions in her estate plans to establish the Joanne M. Grundman Annual Scholarship. During her 36-year tenure with the State of Nevada, Grundman worked primarily in the field of health care administration, including her last post as the administrator of Nevada Check-up, Nevada’s health insurance program for children. This scholarship will benefit students who hope to pursue a career as a doctor of medicine, a doctor of osteopathic medicine or a physician assistant.

CENTER FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY RESEARCH AWARDED GRANT

The Nevada Department of Public Safety - Office of Traffic Safety awarded a grant for $229,291 to Deborah A. Kuhls, M.D., FACS, FCCM (principal investigator) and Laura Gryder, MA (co-investigator), both with the Center for Traffic Safety Research at UNR Med, for the 2016-2017 grant year to continue maintaining its previously-established database. This grant will support adding 2015 data to provide a more comprehensive database to develop statistical modeling that identifies predictive and protective factors for traffic-related injuries.
MOVING FORWARD: RENO AND LAS VEGAS

Teaching and learning opportunities evolve

STORY BY ANNE MCMILLIN, APR
The University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine has prioritized its mission of educating and mentoring students to become outstanding physicians throughout its nearly 50-year history and will continue to do so into the future.

The current phase of increased investment in northern Nevada is defined by the school’s continuing commitment to the outstanding education of its students, but with different, and in some cases new, resources and opportunities. Even with a renewed focus on northern Nevada, UNR Med will continue its presence in southern Nevada with selected learning opportunities for third- and fourth-year students.

“The map for the south comes in the form of a comprehensive transition agreement with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas describing in detail how our Las Vegas faculty and clinical practice will become the foundation of the new UNLV School of Medicine,” said Thomas L. Schwenk, M.D., School of Medicine dean.

“The value system that drove this successful negotiation most strongly is the protection of the careers of faculty and staff members, the quality of patient care being delivered, and the maintenance of full capacity for excellent teaching.”
The agreement addresses several critical components of this transition, effective July 1, 2017, including:

- Offers of employment by UNL V to academic and administrative faculty members and key staff members.

- Activation of procedures and deadlines for decisions made in December 2016 about the practice plan and clinical practice structure and associated clinical staff requirements.

- Transition of sponsorship and accreditation of all GME (residency and fellowship) programs at University Medical Center to UNL V.

- The opportunity for approximately 20 third-year UNR Med students to receive their third-year clerkship training in Las Vegas in 2017-18, so they may benefit from the same outstanding clinical teaching by UNR Med’s Las Vegas faculty members as their predecessors.

- Clinical faculty appointments for faculty who continue to provide teaching to UNR Med third- and fourth-year students.

- Funding mechanisms by which this transition will be managed financially in a smooth and fair way to all parties.

“I am confident that this will guide us in a way that leads to the best outcomes for our patients, students, residents, fellows, faculty, and staff members,” Schwenk said.

UNR Med’s commitment to educational opportunities for our medical students in Las Vegas remains intact, with both sustained and growing relationships in southern Nevada.
Medical students, residents and faculty offer prospective students hands-on health care experiences throughout the year in Las Vegas. Photos by Edgar Antonio Nunez and Office of Admissions and Student Affairs.

**UNR Med in Las Vegas**

**Medical education**

For the past few decades, all third-year students spent part of their year in Las Vegas doing required surgery and obstetrics-gynecology clerkships and about half the class would then stay in Las Vegas to complete other required clerkships. Typically, fourth-year students would stay where they spent most of their third year: either in Reno or Las Vegas.

“We still have students in Las Vegas doing clerkships and fourth-year electives and they need support and we are here for them,” said Cherie Singer, Ph.D. associate dean for admissions and student affairs. “We are continuing that commitment.”

The 2017-18 academic year will be the final year UNR Med offers third-year clerkship experiences in their current form in Las Vegas. Approximately 20 members of the third-year Class of 2019 will complete their clerkships in existing programs in Las Vegas, while the rest of the class will complete their clerkships in Reno at newly developed programs including surgery and OB/GYN. The Class of 2018, and subsequent fourth-year classes, will continue to have robust fourth-year elective choices in Las Vegas.

UNR Med, in partnership with MountainView Hospital, is exploring the opportunity of offering a new longitudinal clerkship for select third-year students in Las Vegas starting in July 2018.

“The academic affairs executive committee is working out the details in conjunction with MountainView to build an integrated clinical experience so that students are continuously learning across all disciplines,” said Timothy K. Baker, M.D. ’04, associate dean for medical education.

UNR Med’s commitment to educational opportunities for medical students in Las Vegas remains intact, with both sustained and growing relationships in southern Nevada.

**Admissions & recruiting**

While the medical education aspect of UNR Med in Las Vegas transitions, the admissions and recruiting efforts will continue at high levels so that outstanding students in southern Nevada may be recruited and matriculated (see sidebar, p. 11).

“We are very committed to a high level of activity in outreach and recruitment in Las Vegas,” said Singer. The admissions and recruitment efforts will be fully staffed by Ashley Sylvester, director of educational outreach and Melinda Thrasher, coordinator for educational outreach, and supported by administrative staff.

“We are keeping our pipeline programs and entering a stronger partnership with the Area Health Education Center,” Singer said, adding that by working closely with...
the Office of Medical Education, current UNR Med students will be a great asset in recruiting new applicants.

Recruitment efforts will focus on the strengths of UNR Med, as identified through the strategic planning process, to differentiate what makes Nevada’s first medical school unique: small class sizes with accessible instructors, excellence in basic science and research, a focus on early clinical experiences and its best-of-class facilities such as the anatomy lab.

The Office of Academic Affairs, including the Office for Medical Education, the Office for Admissions and Student Affairs, the Learning and Wellness Resource Center, financial aid and learning and advising functions will remain in their current building at 1701 West Charleston Boulevard in Las Vegas, although they will be moving to the sixth floor this summer.

**UNR Med in Reno Clerkships created**

Through new partnerships developed in northern Nevada over the past year, UNR Med has created surgery and OB/GYN clerkships in Reno. As a result, those third-year students who wish to spend their entire third year in Reno completing clerkships may do so, according to Baker.

The northern Nevada surgery clerkship began in January 2016 as a pilot and proved so successful, the OB/GYN clerkship was added a month later. Both have proved to be valuable learning experiences for students, Baker said. The surgery and OB/GYN clerkships are community-based with local physicians and hospital partners, including Renown Health, having lead roles in their development and execution.

“Clerkships in internal medicine, family medicine, psychiatry and pediatrics have been an integral part of the core clinical experience in Reno for decades, and will continue to play a critical role in the future,” Baker explained.

Curricular reform is underway for third-year clerkships to make room for additional learning experiences.

“We are reducing the surgery and internal medicine clerkships from 12 weeks in length to eight weeks in both Reno and Las Vegas to make time for a new neurology clerkship and selective offerings,” Baker said.

Selective offerings will provide career exploration opportunities for third-year students.

“They will be able to go down a path they chart themselves to make earlier career choices and those will mirror their fourth-year elective choices, such as dermatology, pathology and surgical specialties,” Baker explained.

To support the growth of medical education in northern Nevada, state funding that supported medical student teaching in Las Vegas is being transferred to Reno to facilitate the development of the same outstanding clinical teaching, clinical departments and faculty roles that UNR Med students have always enjoyed, according to Schwenk.

**New Reno departments developing**

While the new Reno-based surgery and OB/GYN clerkships reside within the Office of Medical Education, efforts are simultaneously in progress to develop full clinical departments in surgery, obstetrics and gynecology and emergency medicine.

“The Nevada System of Higher Education approved these three new academic and clinical departments in service of medical education and in conjunction with our community partners.” said Melissa Piasecki, M.D., executive associate dean for UNR Med. “It’s all about opportunities: for new programs and new departments.”

To create the new academic department of OB/GYN, Piasecki said the medical school assembled a subcommittee of medical students from the OB/GYN student interest group, practicing obstetricians and gynecologists, many of whom helped to shape the program.

Clerkships in internal medicine, family medicine, psychiatry and pediatrics have been an integral part of the core clinical experience in Reno for decades, and will continue to play a critical role in the future.
whom have been supporting UNR Med’s
teaching activities for many years; and
local hospital partners.

Alumna Neda Etezadi-Amoli, M.D.’02,
was recently named interim OB/GYN
chair by the school.

“We are enthused and gratified with
this high level of engagement from our part-
tners who have always been there for our
students. They are showing tremendous
commitment to new levels of learning and
teaching,” Piasecki said.

Using a slightly different process, UNR
Med also will develop new departments of
surgery and emergency medicine in Reno.

Piasecki added that with the develop-
ment of new academic departments in
Reno, there will be many more opportu-
nities for collaboration with UNR Med’s
basic science departments to establish trans-
lational clinical research that addresses the
healthcare needs of Nevadans.

In addition, these new academic depart-
ments will collaborate with the Office of
Statewide Initiatives to further address the
workforce development needs of northern
and rural Nevada.

RECRUITING, PIPELINE PROGRAMS
CONTINUING IN SOUTHERN NEVADA

UNR MED PREVIEW DAYS
Information sessions for undergraduate students on UNLV
campus each fall. Presentations on the admissions process,
financial planning for medical school, medical student and
faculty perspectives, Q&A session with UNR Med faculty,
staff and students; information fair with undergraduate
pre-health clubs, local clinical volunteer opportunities, and
special programs.

COUNSELOR/ADVISOR INFORMATION SESSIONS
Information sessions to teach K-12 counselors and
undergraduate advisors how to guide students interested in
a career in medicine.

OUTREACH PROGRAMMING

HEALTH SCIENCE ACTIVITIES
Facilitated by fourth-year medical students, brings health
science activities to K-12 students: working most often
with high school science programs, but also middle school
classrooms and community programs.

CAREER FAIRS
Information tables at high school and middle school career
fairs to answer questions about becoming a physician and
getting into medical school.

MEDICAL STUDENT INTEREST GROUPS
Workshops and presentations with medical student interest
groups to defined/targeted students. Staff provides logistical
support as well as tabling at events to answer questions
about the process of applying to medical school.

HIGH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS
Tours are scheduled with Las Vegas partnership high schools
including Northwest Career & Technical Academy, East
Career & Technical Academy and Bridger Middle School
for a small number of students in each school’s biomedical
program. Tours can include rotations in surgical simulation,
3G Demo Man, medical student panel, suturing workshop
and standardized patient activities.

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS OFFICE
In partnership with the University of Nevada Reno’s
prospective student office in Las Vegas, UNR Med attends
events targeted towards high school students. Events
include the College of Science Recruitment Reception and
Spring Student Recruitment Receptions.

PIPELINE PROGRAM RECRUITMENT
Annual information nights for both the BS-MD and
post-baccalaureate programs. Include opportunities
for students to talk to advisors and current program
students and alumni.

CLINICAL PROBLEM SOLVING FOR
HIGH SCHOOL HEALTH PROFESSIONS
A fourth-year medical student elective for those interested
in helping teens foster an interest in healthcare careers. This
year-long elective focuses on students in healthcare magnet
programs at Northwest Career and Technical Academy and
East Career and Technical Academy in Las Vegas.

CSN INBRE BIOMEDICAL EXPLORATION WORKSHOP
This tour is a scheduled part of the Biomedical Exploration
Workshop hosted by the College of Southern Nevada.
Students who have been accepted into the workshop are
interested in careers in the biomedical field.

DESERT MEADOWS AHEC STUDENT
AMBASSADOR’S PROGRAM
A community of enthusiastic third- and fourth-year medical
students dedicated to spreading the word about health-
related careers and improving the health and wellness of our
local community. Ambassadors assist with presentations to
local middle and high school students, facilitate mock clinics
and labs, and participate in creating and implementing
curriculum for educational and awareness workshops,
presentations and programming targeting K-12 students in
the Las Vegas valley.
Anatomy of A STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2015, the Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education approved a major expansion in public medical education in Nevada. The focus of this expansion has been the launch of a new medical school in Las Vegas affiliated with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. An equally important, if not more consequential, change is for the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine to become fully-based in northern Nevada. This change has significant consequences for our school’s identity, vision and mission, which have been addressed with a robust strategic planning process.

We have explored this transformation and the creation of a “new” school with a nearly 50-year tradition and history through a rigorous, data-driven process to understand our identity, our partners and, perhaps most importantly, our opportunities in serving our region and state. We examined how we live our mission in a changing educational and healthcare environment, including how we develop a local presence with a statewide vision, how we serve our rural partners, and how we become a major partner with other healthcare institutions to achieve our new vision of A Healthy Nevada.

THOMAS L. SCHWENK, M.D.
Professor of Family Medicine
Dean, School of Medicine

OUR HISTORY

For nearly 50 years, UNR Med has recruited and trained best-in-class medical professionals, guided by a three-part mission of education, research and service based on the values of compassion, respect and diversity. As we enter a new chapter, we celebrate a statewide legacy of growth, impact and engagement.

Our process has been a community-driven, data-informed effort. The UNR Med community identified areas of institutional growth and sequenced them according to vision alignment, urgency and resource intensity. The process defined the needs for infrastructure and the five major initiatives of our strategic plan: expanding curriculum, graduate medical education, clinical and translational research, strategic recruitment and institutional identity and climate.

INSPIRATION & ALIGNMENT

The University of Nevada, Reno’s 2015-2021 Institutional Strategic Plan offered direction, inspiration and alignment with “Our Plan for a Healthy Nevada,” especially targeting research and wellness. This UNR Med plan also embraces the University of Nevada, Reno’s Core Themes of learning, discovery and engagement.
INFRASTRUCTURE

We will organize a coalition for collectively supporting infrastructural initiatives.

We will develop mechanisms for increased communication and transparency.

We will have processes in place to facilitate access to infrastructural services.

EXPANDING CURRICULUM

We will revise our institutional objectives to target the skills, knowledge and competencies to train compassionate, resilient and competent physicians who will be innovators and leaders in medicine.

We will develop new medical education training sites and expand capacity in northern Nevada.

We will develop the departmental resources to ensure effective delivery of our expanded curriculum.

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

We will create and fund an Office for Graduate Medical Education for northern Nevada.

We will develop current and future infrastructure to support and expand residencies and fellowships.

We will develop and expand rural training opportunities for northern Nevada residents.

CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

We will enhance research partnerships with community partners and physicians.

We will expand opportunities for medical student research and scholarship, increasing the number of students who participate in research.

We will develop infrastructure to support clinical and translational research by UNR Med faculty and community partners.

We will expand basic science research by supporting interdisciplinary program awards (e.g., PPG, COBRE) and commercialization of research findings.

STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT

We will create and implement a high-quality, standardized, faculty recruitment and hiring process.

We will recruit community partners to provide high-quality clinical instruction for students and residents.

We will recruit to advance a culture of inclusion and increase the diversity of applicants and acceptances.

We will increase our presence in K-16 institutions to prepare, recruit, and retain the highest quality Nevada students.

INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY & CLIMATE

We will foster our environment of wellness and engagement for students, residents, fellows, faculty and staff.

We will define what UNR Med represents to our partners and communities.

We will increase community partner integration so they identify and engage with UNR Med.
LOOKING FORWARD

The success of our strategic plan relies upon implementing and communicating it with enthusiasm and integrity. Our initiatives will derive financial support through state and grant funding and collaborations with community partners. Furthermore, we are tracking and supporting our strategic planning goals with the individuals who helped define them.

Updates about our progress is posted on our strategic plan website at med.unr.edu/sp. On this site, we will track the progress of each initiative through specific metrics and inform our community through annual reports and the interactive dashboard. The greater UNR Med community can also expect updates at school-wide meetings to celebrate our achievements and receive feedback about the process. [7]

Visit med.unr.edu/sp to track our progress and find out how you can take part to join in our vision of A Healthy Nevada.
We will develop mechanisms for increased communication and transparency.

We will have processes in place to facilitate access to infrastructural services.
UNR MED RECEIVES MORE THAN $4 MILLION FOR GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

Funds will help to increase Nevada’s physician workforce

Last fall, Governor Brian Sandoval announced approval of $10 million in funding for graduate medical education (GME) programs in Nevada, with $4.1 million of the total going to expand University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine residency programs in Reno and Elko. The grant distribution follows the recommendations of the Nevada GME Task Force for the funding, which was approved during the 2015 legislative session.

Nevada’s position near the bottom of all states in physicians-per-capita is attributed largely to the critical shortage of GME positions available in the state. Nevada currently lacks the GME positions to accommodate all of the medical students who graduate each year.

“After this initial support, the programs in Reno will continue under the support of the School of Medicine, Renown Health and the Sierra Nevada VA Health Center. The programs in Las Vegas will transition to the sponsorship of UNLV in July 2017,” explained Thomas L. Schwenk, M.D., dean of UNR Med.

“Altogether, the state of Nevada is benefitting tremendously in new and expanded training programs made possible by this start-up support, eventually leading to new physicians who will serve the state.”

UNR Med’s program grants include support for expanding geriatric medicine, family and community medicine, adult psychiatry and internal medicine GME programs in northern Nevada.
GERIATRIC MEDICINE
$500,000

Expands the existing geriatrics fellowship program from three to 4.5 residents per year starting in July 2017. Recruitment efforts to attract those new resident candidates already are well underway. This funding also will enhance trainee experiences by integrating community clinical training at sites such as the Sanford Center for Aging’s Geriatric Specialty Clinic.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE
$1.4 million

Funding will improve the primary care physician workforce in rural northern Nevada through a robust program based in Elko.

The new residency training program will graduate two residents per year with residents spending the first year of the three-year program at Renown Health before moving to Elko’s Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital for the final two years of training.

To support the residents in Elko, a search is in progress for a site program director, according to Dan Spogen, M.D., family and community medicine chair.

Elko-based residents will treat the patient population that is not employed by the mining industry, which provides its own health care professionals.

“About half the population, those not employed by the mines, do not have health coverage so we will fulfill that need with residents working out of Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital,” Spogen explained.

Residents will see patients across the primary care spectrum from pediatrics to obstetrics and gynecology and get hands-on experience in administering ICU lines, ventilation, and more procedural experiences than they might receive in a non-rural residency setting.

The Elko residency training program will incorporate telemedicine technology to provide health care services and build a patient base in northeastern Nevada, according to Spogen. This summer, Spogen, Jaren Blake, M.D. and Arthur Islas, M.D., all with the Reno family medicine department, will rotate to Elko on a periodic basis to see patients.

ADULT PSYCHIATRY
$500,000

This funding will allow UNR Med to partner with Renown, Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services, the VA, Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center and Mojave Mental Health Services to increase the number of locally trained psychiatrists from four to six annually beginning with the entering resident class of July 2017 and continuing for the next four years, growing the program from 16 to 24 residents.

“This funding will grow clinical resources alongside the growing number of residents,” said David Carlson, M.D., assistant dean for graduate medical education.

Additional monies will be dedicated to improving access to mental health care services throughout northern Nevada via telemedicine.

INTERNAL MEDICINE
$1.7 million

Will assist in the training of five new residents per year through an intensified and diverse ambulatory primary care experience based at Renown Health. (See Resident Roundup, p. 33)

For more information, visit med.unr.edu/gme
The Nevada Flex Program improves the sustainability of Critical Access Hospitals in rural and frontier Nevada by supporting enhancements in quality, performance, finances and operations.

The Nevada Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP) helps small, rural hospitals meet the costs of implementing data systems. Participants maximize their purchasing power through partnerships with other rural hospitals.

The Nevada Health Service Corps (NHSC) matches practitioners to areas in need of health resources and support. Professionals join clinical practices in underserved communities in exchange for loan repayment funds.

Project ECHO Nevada uses telehealth consultations to connect primary care providers in rural and underserved areas to specialists. Primary care providers develop an expanded knowledge base, while patients avoid the travel and wait time to see specialists.
To learn more about the state of healthcare in Nevada, visit [med.unr.edu/rural-health](http://med.unr.edu/rural-health)
Thanks to new efforts by students, and the creation of an Office of Diversity and Inclusion by the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, the medical school is seeing a renewed commitment and push for a diverse student population and inclusive culture.

“The University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine’s mission is to improve the health and well-being of all Nevadans and their communities,” said Thomas L. Schwenk, M.D., UNR Med’s dean. “During these times of great transition, the value of our mission is particularly important. We strive for a demonstrated commitment to an institutional culture of respect, compassion and diversity.”

To help encourage such a culture at the school, UNR Med selected Nicole Jacobs, Ph.D., as its first associate dean for diversity and inclusion, where she will lead the efforts of the new Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

“I’ve been with the school for nearly 10 years, and I’ve always pushed, informally, for more cultural competence and diversity,” Jacobs said, adding that the new focus has been really exciting, because policies and programs can be affected and can create a real change in the institution.

UNR Med’s Standing Search Committee, which Jacobs chairs, is one area where she has seen the impact of the new office.

The committee is in charge of finding candidates for leadership positions within the school’s administration. Jacobs and the committee have created what she refers to as “best practices in recruitment,” to help bring faculty from diverse backgrounds to leadership roles. She says these best practices are designed as trainable lessons to enlighten recruiters on any unconscious biases they may have.

“The problem isn’t usually explicit bias that keeps diverse individuals from entering academia, but it’s those assumptions and associations that we might not even know we have, which can get in the way of finding and hiring a more diverse faculty,” Jacobs said. “That’s why we passed a policy that requires members of all search committees to receive the diversity trainings we have developed.”

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion has also begun hosting “Diversity Dialogues,” which are open forums, held on the third Tuesday of every month, where students, faculty and staff can discuss any number of issues related to diversity and inclusion.

“What we have seen at these forums is a lot of really deep, meaningful, rich conversations about these issues that just weren’t being discussed in this way before,” Jacobs said.

In addition to the Diversity Dialogues, student-led diversity interest groups recently started a campus-wide conversation by modifying a poem about inclusion and writing lines from it on signs, and then using them in a photo shoot to create a message of solidarity.

Crystal Phares, Class of 2019, president and cofounder of the LGBTQIA Medical Student Alliance, says that the idea for the inclusion poem project came about as students witnessed increasing division across the nation.

“As we started seeing what was happening, myself and the other leaders of diversity groups in the med school felt like we had to do something about it,” Phares said. “My classmates and I had seen this poem, and we
thought it would be cool to take pictures using portions of it, and then display them in the hallways of UNR Med, the waiting rooms of the Student Outreach Clinic, and maybe even the website.”

Jacobs took the students’ idea, and raised it for consideration at a faculty leadership meeting.

“We sat around the table and asked ourselves if this kind of public display of diversity as a value was what we as an institution wanted,” Jacobs said. “And, the answer was a resounding yes— that this is who we are, that this is what we value, and we are going to defend it.”

Beyond public advocacy for diversity and inclusion, some medical students, such as those in the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA), are working to bring a more diverse student population to UNR Med, such as the students of the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA).

Roberto Lopez-Pacheco, M.D.’17, said he was troubled when he began reading studies on income inequality and its correlation to successful medical students.

“A student who grows up in a typical upper middle class family is nearly 30-times-more-likely to be a physician than a student from a low-income, working-class family,” Lopez said.

“Our goal is to increase the number of academically talented, socioeconomically underserved students in medical school, by providing them with a current medical school student as a mentor, whose goal is to help them improve specific areas of their future medical school application.” (see Class Act, page 35)

Jacobs says she is heartened by the level of engagement she and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion are seeing from the school’s students, faculty and administration.

“When I first got here, there didn’t seem to be much attention paid to diversity in the class room. Today there are 15-20 hours of diversity-based curriculum in the first year alone. We’re enhancing outreach efforts to increase the diversity of our applicant pool, and we are working very hard to create a shared consciousness on the values of diversity and inclusion.”

For more information, visit med.unr.edu/diversity
As one of several basic science departments contributing to the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine’s research portfolio, the Department of Physiology and Cell Biology recently earned national recognition ranking 17th overall in the U.S. for research funding within medical school physiology departments in 2015.

The ranking, conducted by the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research, tallied up all National Institutes of Health funding and ranked departments accordingly.

“For a small school, 17th is a good ranking,” said Kenton Sanders, Ph.D., department chair.

Sanders himself conducts research in smooth muscle biology, with projects in gastroenterology and urology. Several additional scientists in his department have independent funding and projects on topics related to the gastrointestinal and urogenital tracts.

“We have a Program Project Grant on gastrointestinal motility in its 28th year that funds multiple investigators. That grant will be finished in two years. The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) has decided not to accept any more competitive renewals on this program,” said Sanders.

So, Sanders collaborated with Sang Don Koh, M.D., Ph.D. in the department and submitted a new Program Project Grant on the bladder to a different division of the NIDDK.

“We are hoping to utilize many things we learned about visceral smooth muscles of the GI tract for studies of the bladder. NIH has liked this cross-fertilization approach,” said Sanders. He explained that smooth muscle biology is a major focus of his department’s research.

“All of the hollow organs of the body, except your heart, have muscle cells in their walls to make the diameter change, like in blood vessels or the airways. These very small muscle cells produce a force to make the muscles contract,” he said.

He explained that when we eat, the muscles in the gastrointestinal tract become more active, grind up the food in the stomach, and move it along in the small bowel in an orderly way so that it can absorb more nutrients. The colon stores waste products until it become convenient to defecate.
“Another really interesting thing is that, like the heart, the GI tract has pacemaker cells. There is a spontaneous electrical rhythm going on all the time in organs like the stomach, small intestine and colon, and the pacemaker drives electrical activity, which then drives the contractile activity to produce the appropriate kinds of contractions,” said Sanders. The pacemaker cells are called the interstitial cells of Cajal.

This research could contribute to understanding diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease, colitis and diabetes.

“Many people face gastrointestinal motility disorders,” Sanders noted. “For example, chronic constipation is a problem, particularly in older people. There is a disorder called gastroparesis that is common in patients who have had long-standing diabetes. In the bladder, overactive bladder is a common disease in older adults and in younger women as well. We are trying to find out what causes these abnormalities.”

Sanders leads a department that is a worldwide leader in this research.

Among the research leaders in the department, Sanders named Wei Yan, M.D., Ph.D., who leads a laboratory with focus on reproductive biology.

“He works on sperm development and has an effort to develop an effective male contraceptive. He has been honored for his many contributions to research and service to journals and NIH study sections.”

There is also an emphasis in the department on neuroscience and two young investigators have been hired recently to develop this area. Tom Gould, Ph.D., works on glial cells that support motor neurons and have a role in regulating neuromuscular transmission. Robert Renden, Ph.D. is studying neurotransmitter release to better understand how neurons release substances to communicate with other neurons and cells.

In addition to its strong research rankings, the department provides a broad education in basic science to medical students. “We have produced a lot of good students who have gone on to terrific faculty positions on four continents. That is a source of pride,” said Sanders.

Instructors teach topics such as physiology and anatomy, which include all of the organ systems, and a full dissection course. The department also offers courses in histology and neuroscience.

The quality of instruction in anatomy has been singled out by medical students year after year, and they have awarded the department the Outstanding Basic Science Department award for the past 10 years.
A recently established scholarship endowment in memory of a long-time Reno physician will benefit medical students and honor the man who committed himself to the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine from its earliest days.

The Robert K. Myles, M.D. Memorial Scholarship Endowment, established by his wife, Jean, recognizes Dr. Myles’ advocacy for medical education, dating back to the days when Renown Health was Washoe Medical Center, and his desire to see the hospital become an academic medical center. Jean commented that Bob would be pleased to see UNR Med and Renown working together and Renown becoming the teaching hospital for the medical school.

The first recipients of the endowment will be in the 2018-19 academic year. Preference will be given to medical students who are Native American, or who reside in or who have graduated from high schools in northern Nevada, or Plumas, Sierra, Lassen and Nevada Counties in California.

In establishing the scholarship, Mrs. Myles said she wanted to support students from northern Nevada and eastern California because of their connection to the northern Nevada community which, she hoped, would lead them to practice medicine in the local area.

The Myles family came to Reno in 1958 where Dr. Myles established a practice in internal medicine, with a focus on cardiology, diabetes and pulmonary medicine. His involvement and influence in medical and nursing education, organized medicine, patient care, and public health have positively impacted the health of the community across the Truckee Meadows and beyond.

Myles mentored new pulmonary and internal medical specialists in Reno between 1960 and 1984. He worked in every aspect of health care including multiple terms as a member of the Washoe County Board of Health. He held offices on both Saint Mary Regional Medical Center and Washoe Medical Center’s medical staffs, and was elected to Washoe Medical Center’s governing board when it was a county-wide electoral position. He served as chairman of the WMC Board when the hospital transitioned from county hospital to Washoe Medical Health System, now Renown. He was an active member of the Washoe County Medical Society.

He taught physical diagnosis as one of the first professors of medicine at the School of Medicine and also instructed students at Orvis School of Nursing.

Together, Bob and Jean Myles have created a “living legacy” through their establishment of endowed scholarships at the Orvis School of Nursing, the School of Community Health Sciences and the School of Medicine. Photo by Theresa Danna-Douglas.
When a student told Megan Swank, Au.D., CCC-A, about the medical bag baring her last name on display outside Savitt Medical Library, she doubted there was any connection to her.

“I’ve been here for three years as an instructor and this was the first time I’d heard about it,” Swank said. “Initially I thought there was no way it was connected to me, but when I saw the name on the bag, James L. Swank, I realized it was my great grandfather’s. It was a very emotional moment.”

Swank had forgotten that her great grandfather, James Levy Swank, M.D., had practiced medicine as a general physician in Las Vegas before his death in 1961.

“I thought it was pretty amazing, because I don’t know much about him. He died before I was born,” said Swank.

Initially, little was known about the bag’s history, other than it was donated to the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine’s History of Medicine program in 1989 by a Dr. Joseph George. Upon opening the bag, Swank discovered a letter and blood pressure cuff inside, both of which were previously unknown to current curators of the History of Medicine collection.

“It’s really interesting holding something that belonged to someone related to you. When I opened it and discovered there was more, I had goose bumps running up my arms,” Swank said.

The letter inside the bag, written by a Mrs. Dorothy George to the former director and medical librarian of the Savitt Medical Library, revealed that the blood pressure cuff inside the bag had been given to Swank’s great grandfather, by his father—who was also a physician—and that the bag was used regularly during James’ time practicing medicine in Las Vegas, after he’d moved there during World War II. The letter also indicated that Drs. Swank and George were friends who had offices close to one another in Las Vegas.

Perhaps the biggest revelation was that the bag and blood pressure cuff inside had been part of a much larger collection of Swank’s great grandfather’s medical equipment, and that the rest of the collection’s location has been a mystery for decades.

“It was interesting to read that there was a lot more to the collection,” Swank said. “That being said, it was really nice to know that it was well taken care of by one of his friends and someone who knew it was an important part of Nevada’s medical history.”

The experience of learning about, and getting to physically explore her great grandfather’s medicine bag left Swank filled with emotion and an experience she had never expected.

Holding back tears, she said: “I really feel like I got to know a little bit about him. All I really knew was that he was a physician and that he lived in Las Vegas. And now, with all of this, it’s almost like I got to meet a little part of him.”

James Levy Swank’s medicine bag remains on display in the glass wall case in front of the Savitt Medical library in the Pennington Medical Education building.

Megan Swank reviews the contents of her great grandfather’s medical bag in the History of Medicine room. Photo by James Rutter.
ALUMNI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITY

The School of Medicine Alumni Association is actively working to uphold our mission of service to our alumni members, supporting our newly-branded alma mater and especially supporting University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine students. As matriculation 2017 approaches, we are proud of UNR Med and its continued tradition of excellence in preparing the next generation of physicians who will serve the good people of the state of Nevada, and indeed, the world.

The Board of Directors of the School of Medicine Alumni Association held its first quarterly meeting for 2017 in February. We were joined by Cicero Running Crane, president of the Class of 2017, and Jodi Shpargel from the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs. We were very impressed by Cicero’s presentation when he announced the Class of 2017’s intention to begin a new tradition of giving back in the form of a contribution toward scholarships to help those coming behind them. This is a tradition that we all applaud. We are so very proud of the Class of 2017, and welcome them as our fellow alumni.

In building upon our commitment to support UNR Med students, the School of Medicine Alumni Association also sponsored a celebration for the graduating class. This was among the events leading up to Hooding, in coordination with the UNR Med Office of Admissions and Student Affairs. We are honored to share in the joy of our graduates, and remember the great hope we all had as we moved on to the next phase of our careers. The Board of Directors also represented the alumni at the Dean’s Dinner, held the evening before Hooding. And in keeping with tradition, as president of the School of Medicine Alumni Association, I administered the Physicians Oath to the Class of 2017 at Hooding.

As the Class of 2017 moves into its next phase as alumni, we are reminded how critical alumni are for the continued success of UNR Med. Whether we teach in the classroom, the clinics, or give of our time, talent and treasure, we are all a part of the fabric of this institution. We are very fortunate to be a part of an institution that so greatly values our participation.

We are also reminded of the debt of gratitude that we all have to this school, a school that took a chance on each of us and provided us with the incredible opportunity to add the title of doctor to our names.

The School of Medicine Alumni Association is doing very important work to benefit our alma mater. If you haven’t done so yet, I invite you to become an active member and share in our efforts to support the school that was so very critical to our own success, as well as the opportunity to support those physicians that will come after us.

To join the School of Medicine Alumni Association or to make a gift, please visit med.unr.edu/give

SHARON FRANK, M.D.’81
President, University of Nevada, Reno
School of Medicine Alumni Association
The University of Nevada, Reno and the larger Reno community lost an exceptional leader when Henry Malin Prupas, M.D., passed away in February 2016. After earning his undergraduate degree from the University of Nevada, Reno in 1971, he was a member of the charter class of the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine ’73, when it began as a two-year medical school.

In honor of Dr. Prupas’ exceptional career of service, instruction, and research, the Henry Malin Prupas, M.D. Medical Student Scholarship Endowment was established with gifts from his wife, Barbara Prupas ’86 M.A., and donations from family, friends and colleagues. Scholarship recipients will be medical students from northern Nevada.

“The Prupas family chose a medical student scholarship because Malin was so proud of his profession and to have been accepted to the charter class at UNR’s School of Medicine. He wanted to be a doctor from the time he was in elementary school,” said Mrs. Prupas, noting that although he was fortunate to have a family that could support him financially through school, he knew that was not the case for so many students.

“We chose to support a student from northern Nevada because Malin always wanted to return to Reno to practice, and we hope future students also will return to northern Nevada to practice medicine.”

In his 40-year medical career, Dr. Prupas was not only dedicated to the treatment of his patients suffering from arthritis pain, but also to participating in clinical trials and other academic studies designed to facilitate medical breakthroughs. The author of two books, “Arthritis Made Simple” and “Learn About Your Arthritis,” Prupas shared his medical expertise as an associate clinical professor in the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine for 35 years.

“Malin knew and remembered the names of all his professors from medical school, and he loved teaching medical students, especially about arthritis. He thought it was important for students to know how to identify and diagnose rheumatoid arthritis,” said Mrs. Prupas, adding that he said his patients never once objected to having a student learn during their appointments. “He always said the students got smarter every year.”

Dr. Prupas took pride in showing students how to do joint injections and then watching them hone their own skills. He also enjoyed learning from students as well, requiring them to do 20-minute presentations on topics specific to rheumatology.

“As a researcher and clinician, Dr. Prupas combined mastery of his field with a passion for helping anyone suffering from arthritis and related diseases,” said Thomas L. Schwenk, M.D., dean of the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine.

“He carried his warmth and kindness into the classroom, demonstrating through his words and his deeds what is required to be the very best in our profession. The Henry Malin Prupas, M.D. Medical Student Scholarship Endowment will ensure that the legacy of this exceptional man will persevere.”

The philanthropic spirit behind the named scholarship is in keeping with Dr. Prupas’ own generosity. Among many gifts he made to support the University and its students, he made memorial gifts to the University in honor of his parents, Robert and Berniece; his sister, Roxann Prupas Leid; and his brother, Norman, to name the Prupas Family Suite in Morrill Hall. His gifts continued, ensuring the room’s upkeep and providing support to the University’s iconic original building.

To learn more about supporting students in the School of Medicine or to make a memorial gift in honor of Dr. Prupas, please contact Seema Donahoe, director of development, at sdonahoe@unr.edu or (775) 682-7304.
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Whitney Shofner-Michalsky, M.D. ’13, completed residency in diagnostic radiology at the University of Washington and matched into an interventional radiology fellowship at the University of Washington.

Dustin Holland, M.D. ’14, will be completing his emergency medicine residency at Indiana University and staying there for an emergency medical services fellowship.

Julie Thai, M.D. ’14, completed residency at Benioff Children’s Hospital (Oakland) and is attending Boston Children’s for a neonatology fellowship.

Terry McCaskill, M.D. ’81, was honored with a HealthInsight Quality Award for High Performance in the physician office setting. His was one of four physician’s offices statewide to receive the honor, which recognizes high-performing clinics.

Michael Patmas, M.D. ’81, who has led large clinics and hospitals in Spokane, Wash., Boise, Idaho and Woodland, Calif., has been named the part-time chief medical officer of Gritman Medical Center in Moscow, Idaho.

Edward Eissman, M.D. ’85, joined the Jefferson Healthcare Medical Center’s Orthopedic Clinic located in Port Townsend, Wash. He completed his fellowship in joint reconstruction arthroplasty at the Kerlan-Jobe Clinic in Inglewood, Calif.

Richard Ingle, M.D. ’85, joined the Mercy Mt. Shasta Community Clinic in California. He is board certified with the American Board of Family Practice with advanced training in neonatal, pediatric, cardiac, and trauma life support. He acted as the chief of staff for Humboldt General Hospital, Winnemucca, Nevada, and was named the Nevada Family Practice Physician of the Year in 1992.

Hal Humphreys, M.D. ’87, was named the new chief of staff at the Sutter Medical Center in Sacramento, Calif. He worked on the physician engagement committee for the SMCS expansion, move and EHR go-live that took place in August 2016, and has served as a trustee on the Sutter Medical Center Foundation Board. He is also a vice president of CASE Medical Group Inc., a group of anesthesiologists that supports Sutter hospitals in the region.

Kathryn Eckert, M.D. ’89, was appointed as the chief of pediatric subspecialties section for the UNR Med Department of Pediatrics in partnership with Renown Children’s Hospital.

Freida Hulka, M.D. ’92, was appointed as the chief of pediatric surgical subspecialties section for the UNR Med Department of Pediatrics in partnership with Renown Children’s Hospital.

Patrick Rask, M.D., ’94, completed a pain management fellowship at the Pacific Pain Treatment Center in San Francisco. He is currently the Medical Director of Corvallis Pain Management in Oregon.

Timothy Sauter, M.D. ’94, was recognized as a “Healthcare Hero” by Nevada Business Magazine as Volunteer of the Year in Southern Nevada.

Dennis Cheek, Ph.D. Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology and Physiology ’96, was welcomed by the International Nurses Association with his publication in the Worldwide Leaders in Healthcare. Cheek is a Registered Nurse and nurse educator currently working as a professor for Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences in Fort Worth, Texas.

Travis Kieckbusch, M.D. ’98, founder/owner of Great Basin Orthopaedics,
made a presentation to physicians, athletic trainers and allied health personnel at the “Management of the Injured Rodeo Athlete” conference in December 2016, sponsored by the Justin Sportsmedicine Team.

Timothy Janiga, M.D. ’01, was named a “Top Doctor” by RealSelf.com, a website that recognizes doctors who have achieved the highest patient ratings and favorable feedback on their contributed expertise nationwide.

Sven Inda, M.D. ’03, was recognized as a “Healthcare Hero” by Nevada Business Magazine. He is the chair of emergency medicine at Northern Nevada Medical Center and was honored as Physician of the Year in Northern Nevada.

Melissa Gouans, M.D., pediatric resident ’03, joined Memorial Hospital Pediatrics located in Rock Springs, Wyoming.

Reed Dopf, II, M.D. ’06, was elected secretary/treasurer of the Washoe County Medical Society.

Paul Park, M.D., Ph.D. ’06, is CEO of Hummingdoc which makes home health devices for smartphones to help facilitate telemedicine. Patients can record the sounds of their heart and lungs and send those audio files to medical professionals who are far away. Park’s business is based out of the Innovation Center in downtown Reno. He manufactures his product through 3-D printers on campus and sells them online.

Amanda VanderClay, M.D. ’07, joined the Washoe County Medical Society board of directors.

Shaun Tsuda, M.D., surgery resident ’07, was recognized as one of the 15 young physician leaders to know by Berker’s Hospital Review. Tsuda is the chief of minimally invasive and bariatric surgery at UNR Med. He was the first surgeon in Nevada to receive certification in the LINX Reflux Management System for patients with severe gastroesophageal reflux disease.

Reka Danko, M.D. ’08, was named one of the “Twenty Under 40” by the Reno Gazette-Journal.

Orna Fisher, M.D. surgery resident ’09, joined Illuminate – Face & Body Bar in Las Vegas as chief wellness officer. Dr. Fisher completed specialized training in plastic and reconstructive surgery at Oregon Health & Sciences University in Portland, Ore.

Patrick Woodward, M.D. ’11, joined the Washoe County Medical Society board of directors.

Cory Richardson, M.D. ’10 surgery resident ’15, became the new director of Foregut Surgery at the new Northwest Institute for Digestive Surgery in Post Falls, Idaho. He completed an advanced surgical fellowship at the Minnesota Institute for Minimally Invasive Surgery, the only fellowship program in the United States or Canada accredited in Advanced Gastrointestinal/Minimally Invasive/Bariatric Surgery and Flexible Endoscopy.

Share your latest honors and career achievements by submitting updates to: alumni@med.unr.edu
In 2016, the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine created the new administrative position of dean of admissions, diversity and inclusion. The goal for this position: find someone to focus on diversifying UNR Med’s applicant pool.

Enter Wilfredo Torres, M.D., into that role.

Torres, a graduate of UNR Med’s Class of 2010 himself, believes that diversity and inclusion are at the heart of a successful medical school.

“Our job is to provide great physicians who are also representative of the communities they serve,” Torres said. “By creating this position, it allows for a person with the sole purpose of focusing specifically on making sure we can do that.”

Since taking the position, Torres has helped develop and strongly advocated for a fair and inclusive application process.

“We are constantly trying to fine-tune the way we interview our applicants,” Torres said. “Today, we are using a technique called a holistic review process, where we have multiple mini-interviews with applicants, which hopefully allows us to get a better idea of who they really are as individuals.”

Torres also works with efforts like the post-baccalaureate program to help applicants who may need improvement in some areas of their application to be viable candidates. Often times these students come from academically underserved populations.

“Sometimes a student might have struggled with something during their undergrad, but if given the chance to improve, they can become great applicants, and then great students.”

Along with Nicole Jacobs, Ph.D., associate dean for diversity and inclusion, Torres also serves as co-chair for the Council of Diversity Initiatives (CDI), which consists of students, faculty and staff.

“With the CDI, we try to come up with different ideas and programs to help push a culture of inclusion in the school.”

Torres explained that one of the CDI’s main roles is working with UNR Med student interest groups.

“Our goal is to mentor and help them develop into a more established interest group by helping them come up with new ideas and advancing their interest in diversity,” Torres said.

“We hope that by growing the presence of these groups, we are creating an environment that is more comfortable for all of our diverse students.”

Torres believes that helping to ensure this type of safe environment is important now more than ever, due to the national climate.

“Given the climate we are in, where some students might be more subject to discrimination, or being put down, or told that they are less than who they are, I think when an institution like ours stands up for inclusion and these students, it carries a lot of weight in the community,” Torres said.

Coming from a medical background—he still works as an obstetrician-gynecologist with Carson Medical Group, Torres admits that initially there was a learning curve to the new administrative role he finds himself in, but says that the position is well worth the time it takes to learn its inner workings.

“If there isn’t someone constantly pushing this issue, I think there is a risk it could get forgotten,” he said, adding: “Inclusion has to be at the forefront of our school in our actions, not just our words. I want our students to feel comfortable in their own skin, and to never have to be fearful of someone judging them for the color of their skin, or their culture, or sexual orientation. Diversity and inclusion makes us all stronger.”
NEW PRIMARY CARE RESIDENCY PROGRAM ARISES

BY ANNE MCMILLIN, APR

To help meet the need for more primary care physicians in Nevada, the Department of Internal Medicine developed a new northern Nevada-based residency training tract, focusing on primary care. Starting this July, five new trainees annually will be added with a full complement of 15 trainees by 2018.

Funding for this new program flows from the announcement last fall of $10 million for graduate medical education programs in Nevada (See p. 16).

Of that amount, $1.7 million was set aside for the new internal medicine primary care resident training program concentrated on the outpatient clinical setting.

Keen to the challenges in training that preclude residents from seeking a career in outpatient medicine, Steven Zell, M.D., program director, assisted by Sujatha Pitani, M.D., associate program director, created an innovative primary care curriculum focusing on providing trainees the requisite skills to feel comfortable in the primary care setting.

Historically, according to Zell, residents have not opted to practice primary care medicine because of three factors: lack of confidence and skill in ancillary areas of medicine, inadequate time with patients to address their levels of complex medical conditions and lack of opportunity to bond with their patients.

The new curriculum addresses each of these factors.

In order to enhance confidence and specific skills, primary care residents will engage two half-days per week in skill enhancement clinics to focus and supplement clinical experiences. Skill enhancement clinics will give trainees exposure over the three-year training period, with each clinic building on prior knowledge. On average, each trainee will experience 17 skill clinics in each of the nine enhancement areas spread over their training years.

The clinical areas of skill enhancement range from HIV infection and STD management to dermatology, geriatrics, rheumatology, women’s health, chronic opioid therapy and pain management to outpatient office orthopedics.

“The skill enhancement clinics allow trainees to be mentored by specialists in nine areas so they will know what to do when patients present with any of these conditions,” Zell said. That, in turn, leads to more appropriate referrals, less health care costs and better patient satisfaction.

Notably, residents in the primary care training program will be assigned and care for a dedicated patient population.

Recognizing the need for primary care trainees to feel connected to a specific patient population, our faculty and trainees will share a unique patient population and care for them using an enhanced team approach,” Zell said, adding that the new model allows for stronger collaboration between physician and patient by focusing on preventative health measures and improved accessibility.
FROM MONTANA TO EMERGENCY MEDICINE

BY ANNE MCMILLIN, APR

From Montana to the Marine Corps to medicine. That's the path of Cicero Running Crane, president of the Class of 2017.

Growing up in Billings, Montana, he spent summers on his grandfather's cattle ranch. While serving as a U.S. Marine Corps reserve radio operator for an artillery battery in Aurora, Colorado, he enrolled at the University of Colorado, Boulder. There he was awarded a ROTC scholarship and joined the Marines because he wanted to make a difference in the lives of others.

As a commissioned artillery officer, he spent the next seven years serving his country across the globe in Afghanistan, the western Pacific and Africa. Although very proud of the work he did with the Marines, Running Crane found himself at a career crossroads and decided to look beyond the military to fulfill his goal of making a difference and helping others.

"While with the Marines, I saw a little girl whose life was saved by U.S. military surgeons. She survived and I was struck by the fact that those doctors made a difference in her life, and I liked that," he explained.

His next step was to apply to western U.S. medical schools, including the University of Nevada, Reno.

"What attracted me to Nevada was the competitive and diverse match results; not all medical schools can say that. Our graduates go everywhere, so that gave me options," he said.

His experiences in the Marine Corps taught Running Crane that a rush of adrenaline, the fast-paced decision-making skills and the pressure were where he thrived, so in looking at the medical specialties, he focused on emergency medicine, where he could duplicate that setting.

"I like the work they do in the emergency room. It is the last and only option for some. I can provide care for those who need it most and those who can least afford it," he said.

"I see each patient as a human and treat them equally regardless. By making that connection, I can provide a better level of care, even in a short amount of time."

Running Crane has seen his inquisitiveness as a medical student pay off for the benefit of patients. In one case, he insisted on additional tests that may have saved the patient's life. Another time, he caught a condition that previously had been missed on morning rounds.

While caring for patients is truly rewarding, he also points to the friendships he made at UNR Med as one of the highlights of his career thus far in medicine.

"Since our class size is so small, it has been easy to get to know everyone over these four years. You develop those relationships; you talk to, know and depend on them. I will stay in touch with many of my classmates."

Running Crane has great things to say about UNR Med, pointing out the well-rounded cadre of physicians the school produces year after year.

"It shows in our away rotations, in our residency matches and beyond. The Class of 2017 will be the same."
Cindy Valverde and Diana Padilla, both with the Class of 2020, play leading roles in the pre-med clinic, a student-created mentorship program designed to provide resources and guidance to lower-income and first-generation pre-med students.

Created in January 2017 by the Latino Student Medical Association (LMSA) under the leadership of Roberto Lopez-Pacheco, M.D.’17, the goal is to help pre-med students improve their chances of successfully applying to UNR Med.

“By matching pre-med students with a medical student mentor, they can meet regularly for advice and resources,” Padilla said.

The program asks applicants to fill out an intake form and participate in a face-to-face resume review. Medical student mentors then set up a mentor-protocol guideline, which helps focus on the areas where the pre-med student needs the most improvement for their application.

Nicole Jacobs, Ph.D., associate dean for diversity and inclusion, and head of UNR Med’s new Office of Diversity and Inclusion, said the LMSA program is valuable, because it is working to do more than simply telling these students about the opportunities afforded by medical school.

“What they have discovered is that just going to a high school in a poverty-stricken area, and telling the students how great medical school is, doesn’t really do much,” Jacobs said. “Instead of just advertising for the school, they’re actually creating a real effort to address the root causes of educational disparities.”

The LMSA’s pre-med clinic complements UNR Med’s post-baccalaureate program, the main source of guidance for students with similar backgrounds to Valverde and Padilla. Commonly referred to as the post-bac program, it offers a structured, one-year certificate program designed for any pre-med students who need GPA improvement, MCAT preparation, or additional upper division science coursework to be competitive for medical school admissions.

Both women took advantage of the post-bac program after struggling with their first medical school application.

“The post-bac program is really good, because it essentially gives a second chance to students like us, who do have the potential, but maybe stumbled during their first attempt,” Padilla said.

While both women see the post-bac program as a great option for students who did not get accepted to UNR Med on their first application, they hope the pre-med clinic will save potential students time by ensuring their applications are strong enough to be accepted the first time.

“What we experienced during that initial process, was a lack of guidance and resources,” said Valverde. “We’re trying to make it easier for them, by making sure that if they need help finding research opportunities, or MCAT preparation materials, or just writing an email, that someone is there who can help them, so that they are really ready to apply the first time.”

The two women have strong convictions that if given the proper guidance and access to resources, a student with potential can make it into medical school, regardless of what neighborhood they came from.

“You look at us, we both had our struggles. Without the guidance we received, we wouldn’t be here. I think what we are trying to do with the pre-med clinic is show that there are more of us out there; that these bright students are out there, and with a little bit of guidance, they would be here too,” Valverde said.
The School of Medicine’s microbiology department dedicated a new facility on Nov. 2, 2016 in the name of the former department chair who brought the microbiology undergraduate major to the University of Nevada, Reno.

The Gregory S. Pari, Ph.D. Microbiology Laboratory opened in November 2016.

Photo by Anne McMillin, APR

Mary Froehlich, Class of 2019, points out the features of the human heart to Project Medical Education participants during their time in the anatomy lab. Photo by Teresa Danna-Douglas.

The Gregory S. Pari, Ph.D. Microbiology Laboratory is the place for undergraduates majoring in Molecular Microbiology and Immunology to extend their classroom learning into practical science applications.

The newly-renovated microbiology lab stands as a testimonial to Pari’s enthusiasm for microbiology as a field of study and the University students who decide to follow in his footsteps. Pari passed away in May 2015.

The microbiology major represents a joint effort by the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine and the University’s College of Science to train students at the undergraduate level in the fundamentals of modern microbiology. Research in the microbiology department focuses on immunology with an emphasis on cancer biology and microbial pathogenesis.

The new lab boasts a fluorescent microscope, dissecting microscopes, a nanodrop spectrophotometer, a commercial refrigerator, incubators, microscope cameras along with collaborative and accessible lab stations, improved ventilation and chemical-resistant countertops.

Renovation of the space was made possible by a generous gift from Mick Hitchcock, Ph.D.

• ANNE MCMILLIN, APR

The University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine hosted “Project Medical Education Nevada” on February 3, providing 18 community leaders and those in the broader health care sector with the opportunity to have one-on-one interactions with medical students while learning firsthand about what it takes to become a doctor.

Students, who also assisted with designing the sessions, shared their personal acceptance stories, experience with the curriculum, and anecdotes from their clinical years and the match process. Participants received hands-on training in heart dissection and suturing—both led by students—and were paired with a student and a physician during a visit to the family medicine clinic.

Thomas R. Kozel, Ph.D., professor of microbiology and immunology, led a highly-rated discussion of medical research, including his work on cryptococcal meningitis that has resulted in a diagnostic tool that may save as many as 100,000 lives each year in sub-Saharan Africa.

Before a closing reception, participants were presented with candy bars, some containing “golden tickets” in a Willy Wonka-themed mock Match Day.

In describing her experience, Toni Insera, CEO of South Lyon Medical Center said: “The (Project Medical Education Nevada) program exceeded anything I could have ever imagined. The program was absolutely life-changing. I will make every effort in the future to provide support to the school, the staff and the students.”

• JARED DASHOFF, AAMC
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