With the current changes in teaching and learning, locally and internationally, there are formidable challenges facing our School. Yet, there are also definite reasons to be optimistic about the prospects for positive change over the next few years. These challenges and opportunities exist at all levels of the Western Clinical School.

Physical facilities
The current Western Clinical School consists of a few rooms tacked on either side of the Clinical Sciences corridors of Westmead Hospital. The total area of the facility is less than 350m², only one tenth of what has been proposed for the new Clinical School building at Blacktown Hospital! In our current quarters, both staff and students are suffering, and the environment is far from conducive to teaching and learning. Both the new Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Professor Bruce Robinson, and the CEO of SWAHS, Steven Boyages, recognise the urgent need for a new Clinical School. Plans are at an early stage, but I hope that real progress will be made over the next few years. It is likely that this development will occur in conjunction with redevelopment of the Faculty of Dentistry at Westmead.

Other teaching sites
With the sharing of Blacktown and Auburn Hospitals, it will become necessary to look elsewhere to accommodate the needs of all our students. It is likely that over the next few years more of our students will be taught in private hospitals, smaller district hospitals and the community.

The curriculum
The current curriculum of University of Sydney Medical Program is 10 years old and in need of renewal. Most of you will be aware of, and many taking part in, the process for revising the curriculum. Numerous recommendations have been made, and working parties have been formed to refine these recommendations. Change will occur at many levels, and will include an altered structure for Years 3 and 4; renewed emphasis on some of the basic sciences such as Anatomy; changes to the processes of assessment, Honours and recognition of achievement.

Some changes are expected to take effect from the beginning of 2008, and some from 2009. The working parties will report back to Faculty in July this year, and we should be able to provide a full summary of the proposed changes in the next newsletter.

continued page 3 ...
Wendy commenced as Senior Lecturer in Medical Education at the Western Clinical School in March 2007. Her clinical background is in general practice with a special interest in paediatrics, working since 1988 at the Children’s Hospital (at Westmead). She has published a textbook on problem based paediatrics, has postgraduate qualifications in general practice, paediatrics and healthcare management, conducted healthcare policy research, and taught general practice, ethics, health law, evidence based practice and community medicine to medical and postgraduate students. Recently Wendy completed an NHMRC supported PhD on medical uncertainty and it’s relationship to risk perception and clinical reasoning. Here she answers some FAQs:

What led you to a career in medical education?

Many people in medical education have had quite varied career paths and this reflects the incredible variety in medical practice, and the need to have a good understanding of what students and new graduates face. So I started with a good grounding in biomedicine, or the science of medicine, then worked in a number of settings, from tertiary hospital intensive care units, to community based primary health care. Doing emergency air retrievals was exciting and challenging, but doing home visits to public housing estates in Redfern was also fascinating and challenging, but in a different way. They were all experiences from which I learnt much, and I’d like to communicate some of that excitement and sense of engagement to students, plus an understanding of healthcare systems, and their strengths and inequities. Of course, engaging with highly intelligent students can be challenging as well – but also very rewarding.

What were your most memorable experiences as a student?

The most obvious highlight was graduating from Sydney University with the University Medal, but what made it memorable was the Professor, seated on the stage with the other dignitaries, who exclaimed when I went up to receive the Medal; “She can’t be the university medallist – she looks like a schoolgirl!” For the rest of the week, my boss, who had been seated next to the incredulous academic, would laugh when he saw me. Perhaps another memorable experience was reversing into the Dean’s car – with the Dean still in it. My personal philosophy is to reflect on and learn something from every experience, no matter how good or bad. So I’ve never stopped being a student, and as medicine has so many facets, lessons can be learnt anywhere. For example, always double check in the rear view mirror before reversing, particularly when driving on university grounds…

What will be your role at Western Clinical School?

Broadly speaking, my role is to work with the other Clinical School staff to support and improve all aspects of teaching and learning. Much of this will involve communications among clinical departments, teachers, the School and students, so that we can work together to find innovative, effective and time-efficient ways to fit teaching and learning into the busy life of a major tertiary hospital. With its huge range of clinical services, diversity of conditions and populations seen, and world class research, the Sydney West Area presents fantastic learning opportunities, and I’ll be looking for ways to make best use of them. More specifically, I’ll be providing teacher training and support, for example through Teaching on the Run workshops and the provision of feedback, encouraging the uptake of lecture podcasting in order to free up teaching time for more interactive strategies, setting up mentorship programs for students, reviewing physical facilities and hopefully finding time to conduct educational research.

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MBBS FRACGP MHA Dip Paed
Senior Lecturer, Medical Education
Western Clinical School
University of Sydney,
Mobile: 0438 407 971

Paul O’Mahony is Senior Lecturer in Geriatric Medicine at the University of Sydney and a Senior Medical Practitioner (Academic) at Westmead Hospital. Paul is a graduate of the University of Dublin, Trinity College, Ireland (1987). He spent his internship at the historic Meath Hospital, Dublin (where notable physicians and surgeons such as Graves, Stokes and Collies worked long before Paul’s time). His training in Geriatric and Internal Medicine was undertaken in Dublin, Ireland and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK – the latter is home to the harbour bridge look alike! As Research Training Fellow in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, he completed his thesis, “Stroke Prevalence, Handicap and Health Needs”.

Paul was first appointed as Consultant Physician with a Special Responsibility for the Elderly at the Royal Victoria Infirmary and Newcastle General Hospitals, UK in 1996. He moved to the Medicines Control Agency (the UK equivalent of the Therapeutic Goods Administration) in London in 1998, working as a Senior Medical Assessor and Team Leader in Pharmacovigilance. He subsequently returned to clinical medicine as Consultant Physician with an Interest in Elderly Care (Lead Clinician for Falls) at Mayday University Hospital, London where he worked from 2000 until his move to Sydney.

Paul’s main areas of work interest are falls and syncope, bone health and therapeutics. Outside of work, outdoor pursuits, travel and charity work take up his time. Paul says, ” I am delighted to have started work at the University of Sydney and Westmead – this will be a challenging and undoubtedly rewarding post. Living in Sydney will give me the opportunity to travel more around Australia and I must climb the harbour bridge!”

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APPLYING FOR ACADEMIC TITLES

The success of the University of Sydney Medical Program (USydMP) and other academic activities at the Western Clinical School depends on the efforts of dedicated clinicians and Sydney West Area Health Service staff. The University and School are keen to see that such contributions are acknowledged by academic appointments at the appropriate level. For example, the 2007 USydMP Curriculum Review has recommended that registrars and Fellows who show an aptitude for teaching be recognised through academic appointments. Academic titles bring benefits such as access to the electronic and print holdings of the University of Sydney Libraries, IT services and support, on campus parking, continuing professional development courses (such as in leadership, management and community engagement), training programs in teaching for higher education and research supervision, and research resources and support. Enquiries about academic titles and promotions should initially be directed to the respective Head of Discipline. Further information about benefits and applying for titles is contained in the new document Information for Academic Title Holders: Privileges and responsibilities associated with University appointments, which is available in electronic and hard copy from Karen Garlan kgarlan@med.usyd.edu.au or any other School staff member.

AUTUMN GET TOGETHER

Many thanks to David and Jenny Harris who hosted the first Med 3 and Supervisors Autumn Get Together at their home in Terrey Hills on Sunday April 1. As you can see from the photos, it was a great afternoon in wonderful weather. Students, supervisors and Clinical School staff chatted over lunch and drinks and those who still had some energy left could play volleyball. Thanks also to the Westmead Association for its generous support of the event.

Karen Garlan

from page 1 ...
from the Associate Dean

Our teachers

With ever increasing clinical responsibilities, administrative duties and pressures for research productivity, it has become a challenge for the average teaching hospital consultant to cram teaching into his or her busy work schedule.

Yet, teaching of medical students and junior doctors is one of the expectations and also one of the fruits of a teaching hospital appointment. Without the highly valued efforts of its teachers, medical student teaching in our Clinical School would be impossible. The Faculty has recognised the importance of teaching as a criterion for assessing applications for clinical academic appointments and promotions. We are aiming to better acknowledge the contribution of our teachers through awards for teaching excellence, complimentary teaching textbooks and other tokens of appreciation, and by facilitating processes for clinical academic titles. Clinical academic titles carry all the benefits of membership of the Faculty of Medicine, including free full text access to the extensive online journal collections of the University of Sydney. We also plan to streamline the relationship between the Clinical School and individual departments through greater involvement of year and departmental teaching coordinators.

Our students

Of course, what this is all about is providing the best learning environment possible for our doctors of the future. We want our students to feel part of the medical networks of Western Sydney, and to return to its hospitals for training as junior doctors and ultimately as fully trained medical practitioners. One quality that students most appreciate about Westmead is that as well as being internationally recognised researchers, our teachers are friendly and approachable.

The Clinical School staff are striving to meet all of these challenges by taking advantage of the many opportunities presented by a supportive Faculty and Area Health Service. We also gratefully acknowledge the support of our committed tutors in working together to create an optimal environment for teaching and learning.
Summer saw me pack my mozzie net and raincoat and head off to Zambia in sub-Saharan Africa. I spent my medical elective at Saint Francis Hospital in the heart of rural Zambia. I visited in its rainy season; it was tropical, lush and vibrant green with frangipani, mango and banana trees everywhere.

There was a really friendly community of expatriate medical staff at Saint Francis and we were considered an important part of the team. We worked mainly on the medical wards with a few weeks in paediatrics.

Most days began with ward rounds (ICU or general medical ward) which were crowded with local doctors and students. They were of limited use educationally so we would pick interesting cases and examine them after the round. The language barrier is pretty big in India so only a rudimentary history is possible however all the medicine including patient notes is conducted in English so it’s easy to get an idea of what’s going on. The hospital is surrounded by noise and bustle and the local laundromat is a busy and very productive place!

Outpatient clinics were a great way to get exposed to interesting cases and see many clinical signs. Every specialty has its own outpatient clinic and we visited many. The most useful ones were cardiology and paediatric cardiology where we auscultated 100’s of patients and saw many ECGs and chest X-rays. Dermatology clinics and general medical clinics were also worthwhile.

An elective in a large hospital in India is a challenging experience where a student can get great exposure to a huge variety of clinical medicine. I’d recommend it to any student.

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Often ward rounds would go for 4+ hours as complex cases were addressed and the basic investigations considered. Once the final patient was addressed our day took on a more procedural nature as we tackled the job list we had just formulated. I couldn’t recommend my elective more highly from a practical skills perspective. We were fortunate enough to be thrown into the frontline with tasks such as lumbar punctures, NG tubes, pleural taps and even chest drains, ascitic drains, suturing people up and giving the chemotherapy.

Clinic each afternoon was always a surprise— you never knew who would walk through the door! The main diseases we faced each day were HIV, TB, Malaria and malnutrition, conditions mainly only previously encountered between the glossy pages of a textbook! Fascinating cases encountered in Zambia included women with vesico-vaginal fistulae, leprosy, a 17 year old with lower limb amputation thanks to a crocodile bite, cryptococcal meningitis, the occasional rabid dog bite, severe hydrocephalic

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**MARCEIN TESSEYRE MEDICAL ELECTIVE TO MUMBAI, INDIA**

I spent 8 weeks at the King Edward Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, India. KEM Hospital is an enormous 2000 bed institution catering to the lowest socioeconomic groups in Mumbai. The hospital is associated with the Seth GS Medical College next door so it’s swarming with local medical students. It’s also a popular choice for international elective students, at any given time there are 2-4 international students on elective at the hospital. The hospital offers general medical and general surgical terms as well as terms in the more specialised department of cardiology and thoracic medicine (covers respiratory and cardiology).

KEM is like the rest of India, crowded and noisy and profoundly in-your-face. The patient population is extremely sick and because they present late their clinical signs are very easy to elicit. Common presentations include infectious diseases eg. TB (especially cerebral tuberculomas), malaria, leptospirosis and tetanus. HIV/AIDS is also common. Valvular heart disease is common as are AMI and diabetes related renal failure and these occur in significantly younger populations than in Australia. The hospital has few resources so it’s not uncommon to see patients being manually ventilated on the ward, often at rates greater than 60 breaths per minute (if some air is good, more is better right?).

Outpatient clinics were a great way to get exposed to interesting cases and see many clinical signs. Every specialty has its own outpatient clinic and we visited many. The most useful ones were cardiology and paediatric cardiology where we auscultated 100’s of patients and saw many ECGs and chest X-rays. Dermatology clinics and general medical clinics were also worthwhile.

An elective in a large hospital in India is a challenging experience where a student can get great exposure to a huge variety of clinical medicine. I’d recommend it to any student.

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**SARAH PIXTON MEDICAL ELECTIVE TO ZAMBIa**

Most days began with ward rounds (ICU or general medical ward) which were crowded with local doctors and students. They were of limited use educationally so we would pick interesting cases and examine them after the round. The language barrier is pretty big in India so only a rudimentary history is possible however all the medicine including patient notes is conducted in English so it’s easy to get an idea of what’s going on. The hospital is surrounded by noise and bustle and the local laundromat is a busy and very productive place!

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Each year the Western Clinical School offers scholarships to students taking their electives in Developing Nations or in Indigenous Health in Australia. Generously funded by the Sydney West Area Health Service Charitable Trust, these scholarships enabled six students to visit Africa, India and Vietnam. These are their stories.

**OVERSEAS AND RURAL SCHOLARSHIPS**

The noise and bustle of India

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A typical ward at King Edward Memorial Hospital

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Zambia: A warm welcome from the local children

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Patient line at the clinic

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AROUND THE WORLD WITH MEDICINE

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I was fortunate to spend my elective in Hanoi, Vietnam. It was the ideal place for an elective: fascinating medicine, a great city, and a culture that revolves around beautiful food. I visited two large hospitals: Viet Duc Surgical Hospital and Bach Mai Medical Hospital.

Although there is a lot of poverty in Hanoi, the cities in Vietnam are generally much wealthier than the countryside. The patients in hospital in Hanoi had a mixture of lifestyle related diseases (obesity is a growing problem in Vietnam) and diseases more commonly seen in developing countries, from tropical infectious diseases to heavy metal poisoning.

At Viet Duc Surgical Hospital I spent time in the dialysis department. Traffic accidents are a major problem in Hanoi and the department provided dialysis to many patients with acute renal failure caused by trauma, as well as to patients with chronic renal failure. I also saw many patients who had travelled to China for kidney transplants from death row prisoners, cadaver transplantation being illegal in Vietnam.

At Bach Mai Hospital I visited the Institute for Tropical Medicine, where I saw patients with such problems as tetanus, HIV complicated by tuberculosis, and many cases of herpes encephalitis (this is a common problem in Vietnam and no one seems to know why). I also visited the toxicology department, where I saw many patients with poisoning from contaminated traditional medicine.

Vietnamese hospitality is amazing; in every hospital department I visited I was treated as a special guest. Although the language in the hospitals is always Vietnamese, all the doctors were very keen to practise speaking English and so I always had people talking to me about patients and asking about practices in Australia. (My attempts to learn Vietnamese were fruitless as I couldn’t get my tongue around the tonal system.)

At the end of my elective period, I travelled around Vietnam for two weeks and was lucky to spend the Lunar New Year celebrations in Saigon. The whole country went on holiday and there were floral displays and fireworks all over the city. It was the perfect end to an excellent trip.

Kirstie Archer
Medical Elective to Hanoi

CLINICAL SCHOOL COMPETITION

Are you creative? Then get thinking and create a logo for the Western Clinical School

Prize $250

Open to all students, staff and tutors of the Western Clinical School

We are looking for a logo that symbolises what is unique about the Western Clinical School and Sydney West. The successful image will be used as a logo on letterheads, banners, website etc.

Closing date for entries: 5PM, Friday 13 July.

Electronic or handrawn entries are acceptable (please, no coffee-stained sketches on paper napkins)

Entries to Karen Garlan, Executive Officer, Western Clinical School
kgarlan@med.usyd.edu.au
or call 9845 7661 for more information

The entries will be judged by Prof D Harris, Associate Dean and a panel of representatives from the Western Clinical School.
Every year the Clinical School welcomes students from around the world to experience clinical teaching at Westmead. The Western Clinical School has a special connection with Germany as selected students from Karl Gustav Carus University spend at least 16 weeks of their training at Westmead. We caught up with this year’s students to see what they thought of their experience.

What were your impressions of Westmead?
We were impressed by the size of the hospital. From the beginning everything was very well organised and contact with all the staff was very positive.

How did you spend your time at Westmead?
We had 16 weeks of rotations, lectures and tutorials with Med 3 and Med 4 students and even sat an examination. Johannes also spent time at Nepean and Lismore, where he came across a lot of domestic abuse cases and was warned not to go out at night. He also spent time at the Children’s Hospital and loved the artwork that decorates the corridors of the building. “I got a good view of Paediatrics and learnt a lot. The doctors were very happy to share their knowledge and experience.”

The students also spent time in anaesthetics, haematology, cardiology and radiology where they enjoyed rounds accompanied by an experienced doctor with as little as three students at a bedside.

What are the differences between studying medicine in Dresden and Westmead?
In Dresden we see a lot more patients in a shorter period and it is not unusual for interns to do regular eleven hour shifts. Also there is more of a hierarchy so we don’t use doctors’ first names. The doctors and consultants in Australia are more relaxed and laid back. If we didn’t know something we were supported and encouraged to find the answers.

A Change of Speed and Encounters with Budgie Smugglers!

JOHANNES WEICHSEL, STEFAN DOMANN, ANGELA OTT

EXCHANGE STUDENTS FROM KARL GUSTAV CARUS UNIVERSITY, DRESDEN

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Med 3 students enjoyed a Master Class with Professor Elsdon Storey during his visit to Westmead on Thursday, 10 May. Professor Storey is a Professor of Neurology at Monash University. His clinical and research interests are in neurogenetics (especially the hereditary ataxias) and behavioural neurology (especially the dementias). After clinical neurology training in Oxford and Melbourne, and research training at Oxford, Massachusetts General Hospital and with Colin Masters at Melbourne University, Prof.- Storey was appointed as the first Van Cleef Roet Professor of Neuroscience at Monash in 1996. He is also Head of the Alfred Neurology Unit. He is on the Council of the Australian Association of Neurologists, and the Executive of the Monash University Centre for Brain and Behaviour. The students very much enjoyed his teaching session and had only one complaint - that he wasn’t available for more!

MEDICAL STUDENT MENTORING PILOT

When asked to reflect on their careers, many doctors will describe influential mentors who have shaped and inspired their progress. Conversely, lack of personal guidance may hamper career choices. Following student requests, a pilot mentoring program for Stage 1 (first year) medical students has begun in Surgery and in Emergency Medicine. The pilot provides students with the opportunity to observe and interact with a surgeon or consultant during their usual workday in an informal one-to-one arrangement. Students have responded enthusiastically, as have surgeons and emergency medicine consultants. The outcomes of the pilot will be evaluated, and if successful, a formal program will be extended to all students, providing sufficient numbers of mentors can be found. If you would like further information about this pilot, or would like to be involved in mentoring, Dr. Wendy Hu wendyh@med.usyd.edu.au would be pleased to hear from you.

MED 1 GETS PLASTERED

EVELYN DALTON, CO-ORDINATOR PROCEDURAL SKILLS

We currently have 58 very enthusiastic Med 1 students enrolled at the Western Clinical School. The majority of students state that coming out to the Westmead Clinical School is one of the best days of their week, although some travel great distances, eg Cronulla.

The students attend the Clinical School weekly – Stream A on a Monday and Stream B on a Wednesday – to partake in scheduled Patient-Doctor tutorials and clinical skills sessions. They thoroughly look forward to and enjoy their clinical skills sessions. Simple splints and plastering was no exception! All the mess – Webril, Plaster of Paris, bandages and water – was definitely worth it. The students didn’t even mind helping to clean up – the session was so good!

What did you most enjoy about Australia?
- The great weather and courtesy buses.
- Different cuisines and $2 sushi!
- Surfing & playing tennis for the first time - Exploring Sydney including the Royal National Park, Blue Mountains, Jarvis Bay and the Hunter Valley
- Meeting other international and local students and how easy it was to make friends

What did you like the least?
- Being away from family and friends
- Driving on the opposite side of the road and the lower speed limits!

Most heard Aussie phrases?
“No worries”, “never rush”, “grab a cuppa”, “heaps good” and “budgie smuggler!”

What’s next?
We are heading to Queensland for some scuba diving and snorkelling.

Johannes, Angela and Stefan would like to say a special thank you to all the organisers, doctors and students for their wonderful stay!
Congratulations…

Thank you to the Westmead Association for supporting the Excellence in Teaching Award. The winners, for their outstanding contribution to teaching in 2006, were Dr Mauro Vicaretti and Dr Nigel Wolfe.

Congratulations to Honorary Senior Lecturer, Liza Thomas, on her new appointment as Associate Professor with the University of NSW based at Liverpool Hospital. We wish Liza the very best and thank her for her continued support as a Postgraduate Student Supervisor with the Clinical School.

Baby News!

Congratulations to Scott Williams, Med 4, on the birth of Cadence Frances Williams, born 21 May 2007 at 1.58 pm. Weight 3.820kg, length 53cm, HC 35cm. Both mum and bub (and proud dad) are doing well.

Congratulations to Naomi and Jason on the birth of Noah Jason Brian Muir on 28 March 2007. A little brother for Joshua. Noah weighed in at 4.02 kg at birth and at three months old he is at least 6 kg!

Weddings & Engagements

Congratulations to Matthew Murray (Med 4) and Dasia Esener on their engagement in May. Matthew and Dasia plan to marry in Boston on March 22 next year.

Congratulations to Chad Brodt (Med 4) on his engagement to Jessica Hayes in February 2007. Chad and Jessica plan to marry at the Garrison Church, The Rocks, in March 2008.

Congratulations to Med 4 student Peter Moore on his marriage to Jennifer Boyce on February 24 at St Jude’s Church, Bowral. Best wishes from everyone at the Clinical School.

If you have any feedback or would like to contribute to the Newsletter please contact Niki on wcspg@med.usyd.edu.au

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If you have any feedback or would like to contribute to the Newsletter please contact Niki on wcspg@med.usyd.edu.au