



Looking Forward

Based on thoughtful and insightful discussions with Dr. Gary Schoolnik, Professor of Medicine and of Microbiology & Immunology, I appointed a Task Force in June 2007 to explore the issues and challenges surrounding the transitions faced by senior faculty. One of my reasons for initiating this process was a long-standing concern that faculty frequently defer career planning and sometimes get backed into options they did not anticipate, plan for or even prefer. This was also part of the concern expressed to me by Dr. Schoolnik, who, while still a very successful physician-scientist, can anticipate a time when his own competitive success in grant application or other professional pursuits would require significant change or at least redirection. I admire Dr. Schoolnik for raising these concerns -- which almost certainly mirror those of many individuals.

Further, as lives and careers extend over longer periods of time, these issues will become even more germane. Choices about transitioning from active to part-time work, to new directions or to retirement are influenced by many factors, which are often highly individualized. These include health status, economic security, outside interests, and family considerations, among others. To help assess the depth and breadth of these issues, Dr. Schoolnik agreed to chair the Senior Faculty Transitions Task Force -- along with Dr. Kathryn Gillam, Senior Advisor to the Dean, who served as co-chair. The work of this Task Force is nearly complete and in future issues of the Dean's Newsletter I will detail the important and extensive findings and recommendations that have come forth from this group.

While not getting into the details of the Task Force Report itself, I want to tell you about an interesting conversation I had with a group of senior and emeritus faculty. Each year I host a luncheon to recognize these important members of our community, and I generally use the event as an opportunity to provide a "[state of the school](#)" address or to discuss some other important topic of shared interest. At this year's luncheon, which was held on May 11th, I initiated a conversation about faculty transitions, and I shared some of the preliminary findings of the task force as well as some of my own observations. I was particularly interested in hearing from these individuals about their own thoughts and reflections, and I asked for comments either at the luncheon or by follow-up email.. I received both.

Of course I cannot say that the attendees of this luncheon are truly representative of all senior or emeriti faculty or that those who spoke or communicated by email necessarily reflect the common experience. But several messages struck me as relevant. Among these is that, in general, those who felt happy with their lives and careers prior to retirement continued to be happy following their personal transitions, perhaps because they had continued to pursue issues or topics of real interest to them. Several individuals commented that their personal transitions offered opportunities to begin new careers or interests: returning to school, becoming a teacher outside of medicine, pursuing interests in history as a scholar or docent, writing books for the public (even if sometimes based on medical themes), and enjoying or contributing to the arts, among others. The personal narratives that were offered were wonderful to hear and even inspiring -- although those who spoke may be the individuals who have made the most successful personal transitions.

Based on data collected by the Faculty Transitions Task Force that I will summarize in a subsequent report, it is also clear that a large number of faculty are not planning -- or have not planned -- for their personal transitions, either financially or programmatically. These are the individuals I worry about, and I hope we can provide some future guidance and support to them. Most of us have encountered senior members of our community -- sometimes among the most distinguished members -- who have moved beyond the peak of their skills and, sometimes unknowingly, have lost awareness of their role and relevance. It is easy for this to happen, especially when plans about career transitions have not been developed. But the consequences of not planning can be significant and sometimes devastating. Individuals of enormous distinction can lose the respect of peers and the broader community, dimming or even diminishing the glow of their contributions. That should not happen if we plan wisely -- although for many individuals such planning is not easy or even welcomed.

My hope is that in the next months we will come forward with a series of recommendations that will assist with faculty transitions. I want to underscore that this initiative is not about driving individuals to retirement. It is quite the opposite. It is about opening doors to successful life transitions -- something we will all need to do at some time and place.

Reflecting Backward

Because of the many demands on my time and the importance of focusing on issues that impact the school, medical center, university and broader community, I have long abandoned my once all-consuming role as an active investigator and contributor to the knowledge base of science and medicine. That transition has not been easy on a deep personal basis, but I have viewed it as necessary so that my energies can be directed toward institutional goals rather than individual scientific pursuits. But this past week one of my former colleagues was being "knighted" for his contributions to a field to which I had also contributed, and I was invited to participate in a symposium in his honor. Ordinarily I would not have attended such an event for reasons already mentioned, but out of personal loyalty I decided to do so.

Preparing my presentation offered an opportunity to reflect on some of own work in a field I had spent years working in and permitted me to put the data into historical context as well as the present tense. In doing so, and in ways relevant to my comments about senior faculty transitions noted above, it is interesting to observe how once major topics of interest slip into the background and become the building blocks for the queries of others. Of course we all know this and certainly recognize that the information we learned in prior years (or decades) has been refined, reshaped and often replaced by new observations, insights or discoveries. Few discoveries stand the test of time and the ages and even the most important of these will blur into the interstices of the centuries. But even the more minor findings and discoveries help trigger the next chain of observations -- sometimes leading to newer insights but, more often, simply becoming subsumed into the continuum of discovery. While I am unlikely to take the time for similar events in the future, I am pleased that I did so this time -- since having a chance to reflect backwards opens a better appreciation of what lies ahead.

|

Further Thoughts on CIRM and Stem Cell Research

May 7th was a major step forward for stem cell research in California and beyond. The approval of major facility grants, as reported nationally and locally (see: <http://med.stanford.edu/mcr/2008/cirm-0514.html>), provided further evidence of the commitment of the citizens of California to advance this important field. Without these efforts it is clear that the US would have lost its opportunity to contribute to the significant and highly promising field of regenerative medicine. Indeed, the unfortunate collision of science and religion championed by the current White House has left most US scientists without support to pursue embryonic stem cell research. And even if there is a change in federal policy with a new administration later this year, the declines in NIH funding during the past several years will almost certainly make the federal investment in stem cell research modest compared to its potential. Thus, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) has become even more important. Because of CIRM, stem cell research will proceed in California with what we anticipate will be significant successes in advancing the basic and translational science of stem cell biology and regenerative medicine. And with the new facilities that will be constructed across the state, the ability to further advance this field will be enhanced now and well into the future. This is good for California, the nation and the world.

Understandably the future of this research and its success will be achieved by the faculty, students and staff who conduct the critical experiments and, ultimately, the pivotal clinical trials. These individuals deserve and have received our thanks and appreciation for moving the science forward and for creating the basis for the facilities and infrastructure to support this important work. But is also important and appropriate to thank and acknowledge the individuals who put together the application for the facilities proposal at Stanford -- and without whom success could not have been achieved. These include: Lang Anh-Pham, Director of Finance and Administration in Stem Cell Bio Regenerative Medicine; Niraj Dangoria, Assistant Dean in Facilities Planning and Management; Marcia Cohen, Senior Associate Dean for Finance and Administration; Jennifer Cory, Division Manager in Medicine; Michael Longaker, Deane P. and Louise Mitchell Professor in the School of Medicine and Professor, by courtesy, of Bioengineering; Chris Shay, Project Manager and Planner, Office of Facilities Planning and Management; Bob Reidy, Vice President, Land, Buildings and Real Estate; Renee Rejo Pera, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology; BJ Sewak, Program Manager, Project Management; Theo Palmer, Associate Professor in Neurosurgery; Chris Webb, Institutional Proposal Development Manager; and Irv Weismann, Virginia & D.K. Ludwig Professor for Clinical Investigation in Cancer Research, Professor of Developmental Biology &, by courtesy, of Biological Sciences.

Our thanks to all of these dedicated professionals.

Orthopedic Presents Programs to Community Leaders

On Monday May 5th the [Department of Orthopaedic Surgery](#) hosted an evening event on "The Impact of Orthopaedic Research on Your Activity and Health." Led by Dr. Bill Maloney, Elsbach-Richards Professor and Chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, a number of informative presentations were given that were of considerable interest to the more than 100 attendees from the community. The program included:

- ***Introducing Sports Medicine at Stanford: A Team Approach to New Knowledge*** (Dr. Gordon Matheson, Director, Sports Medicine Programs, Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery)
- ***Sports Injuries: Sideline or in Peak Performance?*** (Dr. Thor Besier, Director, Human Performance and Biomechanics, Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery)
- ***What's a Nice Knee Like You Doing in a Joint Like This?*** (Dr. Tom Andriacchi, Professor of Biomechanical Engineering and Orthopedic Surgery)
- ***Tell Me Where It Hurts: Determining the Cause of Pain Before Choosing Surgery*** (Dr. Todd Alamin, Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery)
- ***Will Surgery Really Help*** (Dr. Gene Carragee, Vice Chairman and Director, Stanford Spine Center, Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery)
- ***A New Way to Salvage Damaged Joints: Cellular Grafting to Reverse the Death of Bone*** (Dr. Stuart Goodman, Robert L and Mary Ellenburg Professor of Surgery)
- ***How Current Research in Tissue Engineering Will Transform Orthopaedics in the Next Half-Century*** (Dr. Bill Maloney)

Following these presentations, the faculty and guests broke up into small group discussions that focused on:

- *Arthritis and Joint Replacement* (Drs. Stuart Goodman, James Huddleston, and Bill Maloney)
- *Exercise and Sports Medicine* (Dr. Gary Fanton and Gordon Matheson)
- *Hands and Limbs* (Drs. Thor Besier and Amy Ladd)
- *Spine and Back* (Drs Todd Alamin, Gene Carragee and Ivan Cheng)

I felt that the program was highly informative and very well received. Thanks to all.

Addendum to a Previous Dean's Newsletter Story

Following the publication of the remarks about the history of the School of Medicine that I made at the April 25, 2008 Centennial Dinner (http://deansnewsletter.stanford.edu/archive/05_05_08.html#1), Dr. Leslie Zatz, Professor of Radiology Emeritus, and Dr. Richard Hoppe, Professor and Chair in Radiation Oncology, wrote to point out the important role played by Drs. Henry Kaplan and Avram Goldstein in the recruitments of Dr. Arthur Kornberg and other transformational scientists to Stanford after the move of the school from San Francisco to Palo Alto. [The story has been edited](#) to clarify when Drs. Kaplan and Goldstein came to Stanford and to acknowledge their crucial role in our history. Thanks to Dr. Zatz and to Dr. Hoppe for this important clarification.

Basic Science and Clinical Research Faculty Photo Shoot

I want to let you know that the Public Web & New Media Group within IRT is hosting photo shoots for all basic science and clinical research faculty at the School of Medicine on Tuesday, May 20, and Wednesday, May 28. Photos will be taken free of charge and on a first-come, first-served basis from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Beckman Lobby, ground floor.

These shoots are offered in collaboration with the Dean's Office and the Office of Communications & Public Affairs and will supplement the physician portraits taken by Stanford Hospital & Clinics and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, which are used widely across the medical center. The goal is to create a collection of up-to-date portraits of all school faculty. Portraits from these sessions will be made available, as appropriate, for use by the media and in the school's print and online communications, including the school's Web sites, press releases, the Medical Center Report and the CAP profile system. All participants will receive copies of their portraits for their own use.

All basic science and clinical science faculty who are not credentialed at the hospitals are invited to participate. Clinical faculty involved in patient care at SHC and LPCH are encouraged to attend the physician photo shoots regularly offered by the hospitals.

Awards and Honors

- **Dr. Phil Beachy**, Ernest and Amelia Gallo Professor of Developmental Biology and Member of the Stanford Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, received the highly prestigious 2008 March of Dimes Award for his seminal work in developmental biology. He shares this award with Cliff Tabin of Harvard. Congratulations to Phil Beachy!
Profile: http://med.stanford.edu/profiles/Philip_Beachy/
- **Drs. Henry W. Jones III, Adjunct Clinical Professor of Medicine, and Jeffrey Croke, former Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine**, were honored recently at the Ten Year Anniversary Celebration of the Stanford University Introductory Seminar Program for their long and distinguished service in teaching Stanford freshmen and sophomores in this special program. Congratulations to Drs. Jones and Croke!
- **Peter Parham, Ph.D., Professor of Structural Biology**, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, which is composed of 1300 of the most distinguished scientists from the United Kingdom and around the world. He was distinguished for his work defining the molecular basis and functional effects of polymorphisms of human major histocompatibility complex (HLA) class I molecules and their killer cell immunoglobulin-like receptors (KIR). Congratulations to Dr. Parham.
Profile: http://med.stanford.edu/profiles/Peter_Parham/
- The following are the five student research winners of the 25th Annual Medical Student Research and the 5th Annual Practice of Medicine Population Health Symposium. They will receive their certificates and prizes at an awards dinner sponsored by the Stanford Medical Alumni Association on May 28th.
 - **Mark Chao**
 - **John Downey**
 - **Matthew Goldstein**
 - **Paul Nuyujukian**
 - **Roberto Ricardo-Gonzalez**