

## Dean's Message

**N**OW THAT ANOTHER ACADEMIC YEAR HAS COME TO A CLOSE, it is gratifying to reflect on the many ways our students have distinguished themselves in the classroom, hospital, clinic, research laboratory and community.

Recently I was informed that one of our third-year students, Puneet Panda, has been admitted to the Clinical Research Training Program at the National Institutes of Health, thereby adding to the growing number of UB medical students who have earned a spot in nationally competitive mentored-research programs that support their interest in pursuing careers as physician-scientists. (To learn more about these students, past and present, I invite you to read the article that appears on page 8 of this issue of *Buffalo Physician*.)

The mission of our school is to prepare students to have successful careers in all aspects of medicine that are required to enrich the field and improve the public health. One component of this is clinical care; however, a second, equally important component is biomedical research, because future progress in clinical care can occur only if there is a cadre of today's students who are supported in their desire to pursue careers as scientists or physician-scientists.

As medical educators, I believe that it is our responsibility to assure that our students have opportunities to explore careers in research, should they wish to, whether it be through programs within our school or through external programs.

Among external programs, there are four that are nationally recognized: (1) the NIH Clinical Research Training Program, mentioned above, (2) the Howard Hughes Medical Institute-NIH Research Scholars Program, also known as the Cloister Program, (3) The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's Medical Research Program and (4) the Sarnoff Cardiovascular Research Foundation's Fellowship Program.

I am fortunate in my own career to have extensive firsthand experience with one of these programs—the Sarnoff Cardiovascular Research Foundation's Fellowship Program—an experience that affirms my belief in the value of intensive mentored-research training programs, not only for the students but also for the medical schools whose faculty are selected to mentor these highly motivated students.

Over a decade ago, I became involved with the Sarnoff program and have served it in a number of capacities: as a member of its scientific committee, chair of the committee, a member of the board of directors of the foundation and then as chairman of the board, a position I held last year.

When I served as a member of the scientific committee, I had the opportunity to interview prospective students for the program and to work closely with accepted students as their “guardian” for a year. This entailed visiting the students several times a year at the best research laboratories in the country where they had been assigned, meeting with their mentors and generally working to assure that the experience was productive for both student and mentor.

Each spring, program participants and research mentors gather at the annual meeting in Washington, DC, where the students present their work at the scientific session.

Students who participate in the Sarnoff Cardiovascular Research Foundation's Fellowship Program become part of the “Sarnoff family,” which ensures that—among other things—they continue to have an opportunity to be mentored as they advance through their careers.

Due to my having the good fortune to serve the Sarnoff program in these varied capacities, I can say with confidence that the UB School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences not only has an ongoing pool of students who are qualified to participate in national mentored-research training programs, but that we also have faculty who are equally well qualified to serve as mentors for students in these programs.

As dean, I look forward to supporting efforts to bring these types of interactions to fruition so that our students and faculty can be full participants in and contributors to these valued national programs.



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