



Special points of interest:

- TCMC Welcomes Charter Classes
- Our Students
- Recent Discoveries in Research
- TCMC Links with Community through Education
- Clinical Skills and Simulation Center
- Speakers Bureau Opportunities

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TCMC

THE COMMONWEALTH
MEDICAL COLLEGE

Countdown Ends As TCMC Welcomes Charter Classes

What seemed like an enormous undertaking two short years ago, officials of The Commonwealth Medical College enthusiastically welcomed its charter classes of first-year medical students and Masters of Biomedical Sciences (MBS) students this past month. The MD charter class is comprised of 65 individuals, 70% from Pennsylvania with 18 of the class members from TCMC regional communities including Lackawanna, Luzerne, Schuylkill and Wyoming Counties. This charter class of students not only represents very high academic standards with an average GPA of 3.5, and they are caring and focused on helping the communities that we serve. [Click here](#) to read fast facts about our MD charter class. Click on the photo to your right for an overview of the class, including undergraduate colleges and hometown information.



TCMC's MD Charter Class Photo

(Continued on page 2)

Academic Convocation Ceremony Marks Official Opening of Medical College

After a week of orientation and a special wilderness experience, the MD class joined their families at the Inaugural Convocation ceremony on Sunday, August 16, 2009 at the Mellow Theater at Lackawanna College. This special occasion marked the establishment of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's only allopathic medical school in thirty years.

The historic class of 2013 celebrated the start of their study of medicine and their role as future physicians with a traditional academic regalia procession and ceremonial oath signing.

The Inaugural Convocation also marked the award presentation of TCMC's First Honorary Degree, conferred by the TCMC Board of Trustees, and was presented to Pennsylvania State Senator Robert J. Mellow (D), District 22, for his outstanding contributions and unwavering support in the establishment of the region's first medical college. Other ceremonial highlights included the presentation of the College's first President's Distinguished Service Awards to Denise S. Cesare - President and CEO of Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania, and Robert Wright, MD - Chair of the

TCMC Board of Trustees and Robert Naismith, PhD - Vice Chair of the TCMC Board of Trustees. These prestigious awards were given to recognize outstanding support and important contributions to the establishment and growth of The Commonwealth Medical College.

Click [here](#) to view pictures from this event.

The MBS curriculum has been designed to provide students with a unique and intensive learning experience.

Countdown Ends as TCMC Welcomes Charter Classes (Cont.)

The first class of students in the Masters of Biomedical Sciences (MBS) Program began their one-year degree program directed by Maureen McLeod, PhD, Vice Chair of the Basic Sciences Department.

This program provides students with a solid biomedical science foundation and prepares them for various careers and education opportunities in the biomedical and health science fields.

The MBS curriculum has been designed to provide students with a unique and intensive learning experience. Small class size, courses taught by experienced faculty, community health projects, a commitment to student-centered

learning, and individualized career and educational planning services are hallmarks of the MBS program.

Please click on the TCMC MBS Charter Class Photo for an overview of the MBS Program.



TCMC's MBS Charter Class Photo

Recent Discoveries in Research

TCMC is leading the way in the development of research programs that will impact the delivery of healthcare in the Northeast region. Notable achievements by TCMC's scientists include a patent pending for breakthrough medical research, the awarding of the College's first National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant and a \$1.25M NIH Research Project grant (RO1) for breast cancer research. These significant accomplishments raise the bar for innovation and discovery in the advancement of clinical outcomes and will benefit residents of Northeast Pennsylvania for years to come. Sonia Planey, PhD, is leading the scientific discovery for a new method of diagnosing Interstitial Cystitis (IC), a chronic inflammatory condition that occurs along the wall of the bladder. A provisional patent is pending with the United States Patent and Trade Organization (USPTO) and if approved, this test will provide a new, safe and cost-efficient way for physicians to diagnose and treat this painful condition.

Just six months after receiving preliminary accreditation, TCMC was awarded its first NIH grant. John Arnott, PhD is the principal investi-

gator (PI) of the research study to identify new therapeutic targets to enhance bone formation in patients with osteoporosis. Recently, Daniel Flynn, PhD, Associate Dean of Research and Economic Development and Jess Cunnick, PhD, were awarded a \$1.25M NIH Research Project grant (RO1) to study the mechanism by which breast cancer cells are able to invade surrounding tissue and metastasize. These significant accomplishments are testimony to the ability of TCMC to recruit nationally recognized physicians and scientists. Their discovery of solutions will be directly applied to improve the delivery of healthcare and impact the economic development in the region in the education of future physicians and scientists. To date, TCMC has submitted over 70 research applications to NIH and other research agencies and has received a total of \$3.7 million in state and federal grant funding. In addition, TCMC has invested \$4 million in a research laboratory including the only state-of-the-art robotic and imaging research technology in the region.

A press conference was held on July 22, 2009 at Lackawanna College to

announce recent research innovations and provide a tour of the new high-tech research laboratory. Highlights of the tour included the region's only state-of-the-art research technology including the high performance Confocal laser microscope with 3-D imaging and the Formulatrix microfluidic robotic technology for protein crystallization. This advanced technology improves research methods and timelines that lead to more innovation and discovery of future treatment and therapies. *Reporters from WNEP-TV (ABC), WBRE-TV (NBC), The Scranton Times-Tribune, and Times Leader Wilkes-Barre and Scranton editions covered the event. Click [here](#) to view photos and click [here](#) to view television coverage from the event.*

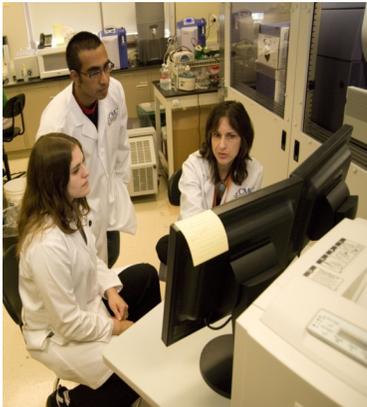


Jennifer Smith, PhD, Assistant Professor of Microbiology/Immunology works in one of TCMC's labs.

Major Contributions to Local Communities through TCMC Educational Leadership

Tremendous community support has been such a strength of The Commonwealth Medical College with progress to date and now TCMC is working to give back to those communities through academic partnerships for educational advancement.

Thirty-nine students from colleges and universities across the country participated in The Commonwealth Medical College's first *Summer Internship Program* to acquire the knowledge and skills required in medical education. The eight-week, full-time program offered students the opportunity to work in several fields of study including: biomedical research, community health, medical education, gross anatomy, facilities and public safety, IT as well as administrative and support departments at the College. Click on the photo to read the entire story.



TCMC's Darina Lazarova, PhD, Assistant Professor of Molecular Biology, working with summer interns in the lab.

The Department of Social Justice & Diversity invited to TCMC's campus twenty rising high school freshmen and their chaperones from the University of Scranton's *University of Success Program* to participate in learning sessions in our labs and Clinical Skills and Simulation Center. Program participants represented a broadly diverse range of students from throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Each year, the University of Success selects twenty students (chosen by public school guidance counselors) for admission to its program. The program then works with the students one Saturday per month throughout four years of high school and provides tutoring, counseling, homework assistance, study skills and early

interventions. Its ultimate goal is to guide students toward higher education and assist them through the tedious college application process. To view photos from the event, [click here](#).

Another strong partnership is in place between The Commonwealth Medical College (TCMC), Wilkes University and Luzerne County Community College (LCCC) to develop the region's first *Pipeline to Careers in Medicine Program*. The program will target rural, disadvantaged, women, minority and first generation students in Luzerne County – specifically in Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton. The pilot has been created in response to a request from the College Board, a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. The organization asked institutions in Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Maryland to develop plans to move more students toward medical schools in response to the documented need for more doctors in the coming decade. Click [here](#) to view photos of this event.

Please contact

[Anne Green](#),

Manager of

Marketing

Communications,

for Speakers

Bureau

opportunities—

TCMC leadership

is available to

speak at your next

community

meeting.

Clinical Skills and Simulation Center Open House



From L to R: Robert D'Alessandri, MD, President and Founding Dean; Kathryn Delmar, MA, Standardized Patient Trainer; Maria Olenick, MS, CRNP, PhD, Director of the Clinical Skills & Simulation Center; and Arjinder Sethi, MD, Medical Director of the Clinical Skills & Simulation Center

On September 17, 2009, the Clinical Skills and Simulation Center at TCMC's Lackawanna campus hosted an open house with demonstrations and tours of the most innovative medical simulation technology in the region.

Staged in a mock "hospital" and "physician exam room" setting, Maria Olenick, MS, CRNP, PhD, Director of the Clinical Skills and Simulation Center, demonstrated how medical simulation technology brings patient experiences to life as medical students learn skill sets and knowledge, effective interpersonal communication techniques and patient care in a practice based safe learning environment.

Attendees experienced real patient symptoms in a clinical doctor-patient encounter such as heart attack, life or death emergency, childbirth and more. Standardized Patient Trainer, Kathryn Delmar, MA, role played with guests as she demonstrated how medical students learn the skill and expertise of becoming a practicing physician.

Reporters from WNEP-TV (ABC), WBRE-TV (NBC) and The Scranton Times-Tribune covered the event.

Click on the photo to your left to view pictures from this event.

New Medical Sciences Building Construction Project Underway



A view of the Medical Sciences Building Construction Site, courtesy of Mercy Hospital

The new 185,000 sq. ft. TCMC Medical Sciences Building is taking shape in the 500 block of Pine Street in Scranton. Steel on the west wing has been completed as construction workers moved to the east wing in early September.

Steel construction is scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2009. The west wing will be enclosed soon to enable indoor work to continue during the winter months. The Medical Sciences building is expected to be completed April 11, 2011.

Watch our real time web cam for immediate viewing of our Medical Sciences Building construction. Please visit our [Web site](#) to see our progress.

To view live coverage of the construction on the Medical Sciences Building, visit our [Web site](#).

Development News

The future Medical Sciences Building is expected to open in 2011 and will eventually serve more than 500 Medical (MD) and Master of Biomedical Sciences (MBS) students and 175 full-time equivalent faculty members, plus support personnel. This magnificent structure will forever change the landscape of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

If you are interested in naming opportunities at the [Medical Sciences Building](#), please contact the Development Office at (570) 504-7000, or click [here](#) for more information on how you can help.



People on the Move

TCMC welcomes the following directors and faculty members to our staff. At present, there are now 139 employees serving TCMC in various positions at our three Scranton locations – Penn Security Bank, Tobin Hall and Lackawanna College, and our three regional campuses, Wilkes-Barre, Williamsport and Scranton.

Mildred Fleetwood, PhD, Associate Professor of Immunology/Microbiology

William Zehring, PhD, Associate Professor of Biochemistry

Edward Lahart, MS, Registrar

Jeffrey Holt, MD, Professor of Pathology

Mark White, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine

Daniel DeJospeh, MD, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine

Valerie Weber, MD, Chair of the Department of Medicine

Janet Washo, MA, RN, Director of Patient Care Systems/NEPA HIE Coordinator

TCMC

150 N. Washington Avenue
Scranton, PA 18503
Phone: 570-504-7000
Fax: 504-504-9063

Middle States Commission on Higher Education Review

Evaluators from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) recently reviewed TCMC for accreditation candidacy status. This was the first step in the process of obtaining full accreditation by the MSCHE and will enable students to apply to the federal government in the Title IV program for access to federal loans as well as other scholarship and grant opportunities.

The MSCHE accreditation readiness site visit team met for two days with TCMC board members, administrators, faculty members, and students to examine the institution as a whole and conducted an in-depth assessment of the College's curriculum for the Medical Doctor (MD) and Masters of Biomedical Sciences (MBS) programs, a review of facilities, and

interviews with departments including Student Affairs, Admissions, Counseling, Financial Aid as well as various support services. TCMC will officially be notified in December 2009 regarding award of accreditation candidacy and if approved, can receive full-accreditation when the charter class graduates in 2013.

"Based on preliminary review, the MSCHE evaluators were extremely impressed with the support from the Board of Trustees and the strong community commitment demonstrated during the site visit," stated Robert D' Alessandri, MD, President and Dean of The Commonwealth Medical College. "We at TCMC recognize the importance of community support in obtaining MSCHE accreditation candidacy status and

achieving another significant step in the history of TCMC."

"The accreditation process involves an enormous amount of time and effort in order to achieve a positive outcome and we are exceptionally grateful for all the support demonstrated by the TCMC faculty, employees, students and staff as well as our community partners who have helped in every way to bring education excellence to TCMC," says Virginia Hunt, Associate Dean for Planning.

TCMC In The News

Click on the TCMC logo to review media coverage featuring TCMC over the past few months.



Speakers Bureau Opportunities

If your organization is looking for a speaker for an upcoming event, please contact [Anne Green](#), Manager of Marketing Communications.

For more information, visit TCMC at www.thecommonwealthmedical.com and don't forget to visit the [Dean's Blog](#).