Humanities Makes Doctors ‘Complete’

Students and faculty showcase their work at the Alice & Bert Lefkowich Celebration of Humanism in Medicine

“Confidence, reserve, engagement, compassion, purpose. I did not know that there were so many names for medical students to go by. As long as a name is accurate... it matters little what you title yourself. ‘That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.’ Right? Whether I am called a ‘medical student,’ ‘student doctor,’ or the reasons why I chose to pursue a medical career make no difference to patients, because it does not help them get better....”

These words, from Identities, were spoken by Katherine Burke to bring the audience to attention and open the Lerner College's Celebration of Humanism in Medicine, which was held Aug. 30 at the Foundation House on the Cleveland Clinic main campus. Katherine, a program coordinator with the CCLCM Medical Humanities Program, curated the work from reflective writings of first-year CCLCM students.

Discovering what you call a medical student, who you are becoming and what it means to be a good doctor are a few of the questions that first-year CCLCM medical students reflect on during their introduction to the humanities curriculum at CCLCM.

“About two-thirds of medical schools have a humanities curriculum, but only half of those – us included -- require their students to participate,” says Martin Kohn, PhD, Director of the CCLCM Medical Humanities Program.

“Our humanities program began ten-plus years ago with a poetry event,” said James B. Young, Executive Dean of CCLCM. “We need to get back to humanities.”

Noting Hurricane Harvey and subsequent flooding in Houston, Dr. Young shared that he went to school at Baylor College of Medicine and trained in Houston. During his residency, he and one nurse were the only healthcare professionals running a 12-bed intensive care unit in a hospital that had flooded (and is closed as of this writing because of damage from Hurricane Harvey).
“I learned a lot during that experience,” he reflected, “including how to change bedpans. The nurse knew more than I did about literature, and we talked all night. She taught me how it’s critically important to focus on these things. The humanities make a doctor a ‘complete’ physician,” he said.

The evening showcased an array of creative work including:

- a poem by clients of the Cleveland Sight Center as part of the Devising Healthy Communities project (see sidebar)
- research work of Yi Gao (’18), Clare Landefeld (’18), Briana Prager (’18) and Anne Song (’18) to understand why patients might not show for their appointments at the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Health Center in East Cleveland (see the June issue of InSight, p. 14)
- a poem by Joshua Niforatos (’19) called The Love Song of the Pimped Student, and based on T.S. Eliot’s The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock. Joshua, who had initially viewed writing as an activity one might do if one had nothing else to do, credits the humanities curriculum and his mentors with turning him into a frequent, and published, writer
- a “talking art” project, featuring the multi-cultural members of a family, in collaboration with the Rainey Center. When you press various buttons on the family portrait, you can hear a member of the family telling their story and playing their instrument
- a performance by Christine Howey, Cleveland-area stage actor and playwright, about her journey to find her true gender (view the performance on YouTube -- note adult language)

Studying the humanities is also crucial from a wellness perspective “Physician burnout is all over the news,” said J. Harry “Bud” Isaacson, MD. “Here’s what I tell my students: Before getting into your patient’s medical issues, get to know the patient first. Learn about them, listen to their stories. It’s a privilege. Building this relationship will help you combat burnout.”

Dr. Kohn closed the evening by sharing a favorite metaphor about the impact of humanities training: “If we don’t keep the furnace on, at least we’ll keep the pilot light on. So when students go out into the world and sometimes forget to practice what they’ve learned, they can always go back and kindle the flame.”

More than 50 people, including medical students, faculty, physicians, charitable donors and guests, attended the Alice & Bert Lefkowich Celebration of Humanism in Medicine. The event was made possible by a generous gift from Alice and the late Bert Lefkowich to help advance the work of their Cleveland Clinic physician, Dr. Isaacson, who is leading the program.

“We cannot just study the science of medicine. We won’t be the same doctors. We won’t be the same people.”

– Tom Abelson, MD
A Doctor’s Summons to His Patients
As imagined by Cleveland Sight Center clients and poet Katie Daley

Keep me from acting too cool, or if I act too cool, keep me from being cruel. If there is ice between us, remind me that it’s ours to break together.

If I forget to offer you my hand, offer yours. Take mine and shake it. Say my name. Say yours.

Does my voice sound glacial? Then tell me a joke. Make me laugh. Tell me how handsome I look in my baby blue scrubs. Remind me that you and I both stand in the same slow thaw of becoming human.

We don’t have much time, so tell me your story. Make sure I hear every nuance, every twist. Insist I use all my senses, not just these statistics blinking on my screen. Then, teach me how to reach you. Invite me to turn from this computer and face you. Make me wise with your wisdom.

Know this about me: I am here because I had a dream to bring new life into the old world, to heal one person at a time, to staunch the blood and release the pain.

Know that the narrow, sleepless path from there to here might have hazed and hardened me. Know that in this maze of data input, time limits, litigations and bottom lines, I might forget you are a mother, a worker, a sister, a citizen. In the climate of my own forgetfulness, you, too, might forget I am a son, a husband, a brother, a believer.

So let us remind one another. Then, help me lighten this load. Confirm that all this sickness and death is not my fault. Assure me you understand how life-gutting it is for me to give you the life-gutting news. Remind me we are both tethered to the same pain. Remind me there are things other than our bodies here to be healed. This vacancy between us, for instance. Persuade me. Remember that I, like you, am human enough to be persuaded.

Upcoming Humanities Events
• Story Slam 3, Oct. 4, 6:30-9 p.m., Market Garden Brewery, Ohio City
  The guest presenter is Suzanne Koven, MD, and a number of students from CCLCM, CWRU SOM and Ohio University Heritage School of Osteopathic Medicine will be reading.

• Music and Medicine presentation and concert, Nov. 15, approximately 7-9 p.m., Cleveland Clinic
  Enjoy a piano recital with artist-in-residence Prisca Benoit, who will play a carefully selected repertoire that corresponds to the scientific content of the lecture. Audience members may be surveyed to gauge physiological changes and emotional status during the recital, with the results displayed immediately on a large screen.
CCLCM Collaborates on New Graduate Program

In collaboration with CCLCM and Case Western Reserve University, the Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Institute is offering a PhD track for residents and fellows called PRISM (Physician Researchers Innovating in Science and Medicine). Participants can earn a PhD in Molecular Medicine.

PhD programs generally require 54 credit hours. But since most PRISM students will have 18 hours waived based on their MD coursework, the remaining 36 hours can usually be completed in two years. Research is done in a basic science laboratory, and the program requires a qualifying exam and at least one first author publication, similar to any PhD program.

We are promoting this program to Cleveland Clinic residents and fellows, and many have expressed a robust interest in the opportunity.

Female Students Celebrate Women in Medicine Month

September was Women in Medicine Month and, to celebrate, a group of female CCLCM students gathered for a photo and then tweeted it from the Cleveland Clinic Twitter account and their personal social media accounts. #WIMMonth

We’re proud of our future female physicians!

Learn more about how women in medicine are overcoming gender inequality.
Patient Safety & Quality Tip:

Encourage Your Patients to Achieve Healthy Goals

Murat Altinay, MD
Center for Behavioral Health

I always tell patients to look at themselves (and life for that matter) as a whole. In addition to coming to doctor’s appointments and taking medications, things that are as important are:

- having a sense of purpose
- getting good nutrition, sleep and exercise
- building relationships: family, friends, community
- seeking intellectual stimulation
- carving out time for creativity and play

I ask them to take small but consistent steps in achieving these goals and ask them if they would be agreeable to make noticeable progress in at least one of these areas between two visits.

To Register:

1. Log into COMET
   - Note: This event is visible only on a computer with intranet access. You will not see it if you are using a mobile device.
2. Choose the “Catalog” tab, and then “Search by Category” tab. Choose “Global Leadership and Learning Institute” from the menu.
3. Scroll down to “Essentials program for Health Professions Educators” and enroll in the CCLCM New Faculty Orientation.
   - Note: Sessions are listed in alphabetical order.

Medical School Survival Tip

According to Daniel R. Paull, MD, author of So You Got Into Medical School... Now What? A Guide to Preparing for the Next Four Years, “You should approach every rotation with a positive outlook and not let your peers’ opinions paint your rose-colored glasses black.”

As corny as it may sound, situations are what you make of them. Take advantage of the learning opportunities during rotations without letting the negative attitudes of others affect you. Rather, let your positive attitude affect others!
CCLCM Leaders Receive Alumni Awards

Kathleen Franco, MD (CCF’92), and Gene H. Barnett, MD, MBA (GS’81, NS’86), received Cleveland Clinic Alumni Association awards at the Centennial Legacy Society and Alumni Awards Reception on Sept. 15.

Dr. Franco, Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs, was given the Alumni Association Special Achievement Award for 2017 in recognition of her many accomplishments in medicine, academics and institutional leadership.

Here is an excerpt from her award plaque:

In a career that spans more than 40 years, Dr. Franco has served as a staff psychiatrist who aids those in distress; a Professor of Medicine who opens the doors of knowledge to others; and, as an Associate Dean of the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine where she helps students to become doctors.

It is through her keen mind and her staunch dedication that she guides Cleveland Clinic in innumerable ways to meet its founding mission: To provide better care of the sick, investigate their problems, and educate those who serve.

The Special Achievement Award was established in 1985 to recognize physicians and scientists for exceptional, enduring achievements and leadership that bring pride and recognition to the Cleveland Clinic community.

Dr. Barnett, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, was given the Alumni Association Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2017 in recognition of his outstanding clinical achievements.

Here is an excerpt from his award plaque:

His work related to computer-assisted neurosurgery has earned him the admiration of his peers and the gratitude of his patients and has made Cleveland Clinic a standout in the field.

Dr. Barnett’s dedication to excellence, his ability to break new ground and his curiosity to see what lies ahead are an inspiration to us all.

Established in 1977, the Distinguished Alumnus Award recognizes alumni for exceptional enduring achievements and leadership that bring pride and recognition to the Cleveland Clinic community.

In addition to receiving a plaque in their honor, Drs. Franco and Barnett will have their names engraved on the permanent plaque displayed in the Alumni Office.

Congratulations to you both on your well-deserved recognition!
Daniel Moussa Presents at SGIM Meeting

Daniel Moussa ('21) delivered an oral presentation at the Society of General Internal Medicine 2017 Midwest Regional Meeting on “The use of HoloLens to improve the teaching of renal anatomy and physiology in medical school.”

The research work was completed by Daniel and fellow students Lu Dai ('18) and Anne Song ('18), along with Cleveland Clinic faculty Alan L. Hull, MD, PhD; Michael Lioudis, MD; Jennifer McBride, PhD; Neil Mehta, MBBS, MS; Christine Moravec, PhD; and Joseph Nally, MD.

The SGIM meeting, which was held in mid-September in Chicago, focused on “Optimizing Professional Development and Patient Care Across the Career Spectrum.”

Congratulations to the entire team!

Welcome to the World

Congratulations to C. Beau Hilton ('20) and his wife, Lori, who welcomed their third child, a girl, on Aug. 29. Mom and baby Nora Mae are doing well!

Students and faculty: Be sure to email Laura Greenwald with news about your achievements, such as publications, presentations, awards and patents, so that we can share your terrific news with our entire education community!
Dr. Roy Hwang Heads Back to W.Va.

Roy Hwang, MD ('11), is completing a functional neurosurgery fellowship at Albany Medical Center, New York. Next year, he is planning to return to West Virginia University Hospitals to continue practicing neurosurgery and to serve as an assistant professor of surgery.

Dr. Hwang is pictured here with his wife, Kate, and children, David and Claire.

Dr. Michael Knight Earns 40 Under 40 Award

Michael Knight, MD ('12), was among the 40 influential leaders in healthcare recently honored by the National Minority Quality Forum. The 40 Under 40 Award recognizes young minority leaders who are making a difference in healthcare.

Dr. Knight currently is practicing internal medicine at Crescenz VA Medical Center/University of Pennsylvania, Perlman School of Medicine. He is the founder and president of the Renewing Health Foundation, which seeks to improve the health of underserved communities.

Read more about Dr. Knight and the 40 Under 40 Award.
Philanthropic Giving

The Education Institute welcomes donations to advance its mission of educating those who serve. Individuals, families, foundations and corporations that believe in the value of education are making a difference in the future of patient care with their generosity. To learn how you can help, please contact Amy Kubacki, Senior Director of Development, at 216.636.5024 or at kubacka@ccf.org.

Alumni: Share Your News

We’d like to hear about what you’ve been doing since graduation. If you have news to share (maybe you’re involved in an interesting research project or you recently returned from a global health mission), please email Laura Greenwald at greenwl@ccf.org.