

Upstate Hosts Women in Science Symposium

Instead of a traditional inaugural celebration, President David R. Smith, MD, used those funds to create a new Upstate tradition: the SUNY Upstate Symposium. Conceived as an annual event that covers a variety of timely and provocative topics, the “inaugural” symposium was no exception.

On March 13, Donna E. Shalala, PhD, president of the University of Miami and a leading figure in academia, presented the keynote address at “On the Other Side of the Glass Ceiling: Reflections on the Status of Women in Science and Academia.”

“There are significant challenges to the success for women in academia and in science and having a day set aside to identify markers for success and ongoing challenges is vital to the community,” says Sara Grethlein, MD, Upstate associate professor and associate dean for graduate medical education, who chaired the symposium planning committee.

Shalala served as chair of a panel that developed the recently released “Beyond Bias & Barriers: The National Academy of Sciences Report on Women in Academic Science & Engineering.” The report noted that while women



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Chancellor Ryan to Step Down

State University of New York Chancellor John R. Ryan will step down as chancellor at the end of May to become the president and CEO of the Center for Creative Leadership, headquartered in Greensboro, North Carolina.

In making his announcement Chancellor Ryan said, “I have greatly enjoyed my five years at the State University of New York, first as president of the Maritime College, then as interim president of the University at Albany, and for the past two years as your chancellor.

“With the team of outstanding campus presidents, highly skilled administrators and staff at the System and campus levels, a strong faculty that will become truly exceptional with the hundreds of new scholars now being hired and the largest student enrollment in our history, SUNY is advancing toward the threshold of greatness.”

State University of New York Board of Trustees Chairman Thomas F. Egan said, “John Ryan has served the State University of New York with integrity and distinction. A true leader and public servant, he has moved the University forward, gaining the confidence of students, faculty and elected officials of all political persuasions. The foundation he has put in place will enable the State University to become one of the great institutions of the 21st Century. We wish John and his wife, Diane, continued success.”

The SUNY Board of Trustees is expected to name an interim chancellor this spring as it undertakes a national search for Ryan’s successor.

in the last 30 years have earned 30 percent of the doctoral degrees in behavioral and social sciences and 20 percent of the doctoral degrees in the life sciences, there are still few serving as full professors. Virtually absent from this rank are women from minority groups.

In addition to Shalala, local analysis and observation was provided by Nancy Cantor, PhD, president of Syracuse University, Debbie L. Sydow, PhD, president of Onondaga Community College, Deborah F. Stanley, PhD, president of SUNY Oswego, and Lois B. DeFleur, PhD, president of SUNY Binghamton.

The daylong symposium also featured presentations by Upstate faculty, students, and staff members on various issues pertaining to career paths, leadership and respect.

Upstate Responds to Berger Commission Recommendations

In November 2006, the New York State Commission on Healthcare Facilities in the 21st Century, more commonly known as the Berger Commission, recommended hospital and nursing home closures, mergers and consolidations throughout the state as a way to gain greater efficiencies in the state's healthcare system.

Included in that report was a recommendation that Crouse Hospital and SUNY Upstate Medical University join "under a single unified governance structure under the control of an entity other than the State University of New York and that the joined facility be licensed for approximately 500 to 600 inpatient beds."

These recommendations became law in January and now facilities across the state must develop plans to address these recommendations.

Currently, as one of only three hospitals across the state to be sponsored by SUNY, University Hospital's sole authority lies with the SUNY Board of Trustees. Altering that authority would require legislative changes that would diminish the leadership role of the Board of Trustees on matters related to these public-mission oriented hospitals.

While SUNY Upstate certainly should continue to investigate efficiencies and access to care suggested by the Berger Report, we do not believe that removing its own teaching hospital "University Hospital" and placing it under a governance structure other than the State University of New York, will achieve those ends.

SUNY Upstate is one of only 125 academic medical centers in the nation. These institutions, which are built around medical schools and teaching hospitals, have a variety of structures. However, the SUNY Upstate model "with its patient care, colleges and research under one roof" has served our community well and draws bright minds to Syracuse. A change in governance that imperils our partnership of teaching, research and patient care will not be in the best interest of the state.

The change in governance would have a significant impact on our teaching mission. University Hospital was specifically built in 1965 as a teaching site for SUNY Upstate's medical campus. No other hospital in the region nurtures as many medical and nursing students or as many new doctors (450 this year) for their residencies. If SUNY Upstate loses its own hospital, can we guarantee that the next generation of caregivers will have access to the same level of clinical education? The change in governance would also affect our patient care mission. Far from being heavily financed by the taxpayers, University Hospital receives less than 9 percent of its funding from the state. That funding helps UH defray the cost of crucial but unprofitable programs: the region's only Burn Unit, Level-I trauma center, Spina Bifida Clinic, and 20 other services not found anywhere else locally. If SUNY Upstate loses its own hospital, can we guarantee that these services will still be available here for the patients of Central New York?

The change in governance would threaten our mission of service to the community. Currently, our students, faculty and staff provide endless hours of volunteer service on behalf of the university to educating young children, providing medical care to the homeless and supporting local causes seeking cures for cancer and other diseases. If our governance struc-

ture changes will the support for our community service mission be allowed to continue?

Lastly, the change in governance would chill the academic environment at University Hospital. Such an environment attracts medical specialists who have research interests, and those who want to teach the latest techniques. This greatly contributes to the quality of life for our community. The uncertainty created by the prospect of SUNY Upstate losing its hospital has already deterred some promising applicants from coming to Syracuse.

SUNY Upstate feels strongly that removing University Hospital from its public, well-functioning university environment will have serious consequences for SUNY Upstate's recruitment of specialists and scientists, as well as on the health and economy of our community.

Our response to the Berger Commission is to forge a partnership with Crouse Hospital that retains our public governance and public mission and brings greater benefits to patients and enhanced efficiencies to the healthcare.

The Berger Commission has given us an opportunity to look far into the future, to be visionary in our leadership so that we can promise our patients, students and the community a partnership that delivers the very best healthcare, education and research for all.

Cord Blood Institute Established

The State of New York has provided \$10 million in funding to establish the New York State Cord Blood Science Institute in Syracuse, a collaborative effort between the State Department of Health, its Wadsworth Center laboratories, SUNY Upstate Medical University, and the New York State Blood and Tissue Council.

"The Institute will develop a program to facilitate the donation of potentially life-saving stem cells from umbilical cords," said then-Governor George Pataki. "These stem cells have been shown to have potential for the treatment of a variety of blood and immune-system related diseases including leukemia, lymphoma, sickle cell anemia and

Krabbes Disease. This cord blood bank will also dramatically increase the potential for cord blood transplants.

The program will collect, type, test, store and distribute for research treatment cells derived from umbilical cord blood collections, which until now has generally been routinely discarded as medical waste. While some other small public umbilical cord blood banks exist in the New York City area using federal funding, the Syracuse facility will be one of the largest of its type in the nation, with construction potentially starting as early as mid-2007, and will be the first in New York to be constructed using State funding.

Recruiting Diversity

In an effort to increase the diversity of the health professionals it trains, Upstate has added a multicultural recruitment specialist to its admissions team.

A Syracuse native, Nakeia Chambers joined the Upstate admissions staff in September. Chambers has a master's degree in counseling and previously worked as a multicultural recruitment coordinator at Messiah College in Pennsylvania.

According to Jennifer Welch, director of Student Admissions, Chambers will concentrate on the recruitment of applicants from underrepresented groups, focusing on geographic need.

"In our city, we have significant patient populations of Latinos, African Americans and Native Americans and too few doctors who share their ethnic and cultural backgrounds," she says.



Former Governor George Pataki announces the establishment of the New York State Cord Blood Science Institute in Syracuse.



Nakeia Chambers

David R. Smith, MD, discusses the Berger Commission Report with members of the Upstate community.

