Tackling the Problem of Student Food Insecurity
The Joy of Our Missions

THINK YOU WILL AGREE THAT THIS SPRING HAS BEEN SPECIAL. IN FEBRUARY, I HAD THE HONOR OF SPEAKING AT THE WHITE COAT CEREMONY FOR THE M.D. CLASS OF 2024, DELAYED BY THE PANDEMIC. IN MARCH, I JOINED FOURTH-YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS FOR THE FIRST IN-PERSON MATCH DAY CELEBRATION SINCE 2019. AND THIS MONTH, I SHARED IN THE SCHOOL’S REVIVED HONORS AND AWARDS CEREMONY, RECOGNIZING THE EXCELLENCE OF OUR M.D. AND GRADUATE STUDENTS AND THEIR TEACHING FACULTY.


NOW I AM FEELING RESTORED HOPE AS OHSU IS GROWING. TO MEET THE URGENT DEMAND FOR MORE PATIENT BEDS IN OREGON AND ACCESS TO SPECIALTY AND ROUTINE CARE IN OUR STATE’S EXPANDING AND AGING POPULATION, OHSU IS LAUNCHING CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW INPATIENT WING ON THE FORMER SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY SITE AND DISCUSSING ADDITIONAL EXPANSION PROJECTS WITH THE OHSU BOARD OF DIRECTORS. KEEP UP WITH THIS WORK AT HTTPS://NEWS.OHSU.EDU.

OUR EDUCATION MISSION IS MOVING FRONT AND CENTER TO SUPPORT THE STATE’S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE NEEDS WITH THE LEGISLATURE’S PASSAGE OF THE 30-30-30 INITIATIVE. THIS $45 MILLION INVESTMENT WILL EXPAND THE NUMBER OF OHSU STUDENTS IN CLINICAL PROGRAMS BY 30 PERCENT AND THE DIVERSITY OF THE STUDENT BODY BY 30%, ALL BY 2030. IT WILL CHANGE THE FACE OF MEDICINE IN OREGON AND GREATLY EXPAND OUR ALUMNI COMMUNITY. (READ MORE P. 4.)

THIS IS AN EXCITING TIME AS WE BROADEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR TALENTED STUDENTS TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR DIVERSE LIFE EXPERIENCES AND SKILLS TO SERVE MORE OREGONIANS. AS BIOMEDICAL SCIENTISTS AND CLINICIANS WHOSE WORK WAS PARAMOUNT TO EMERGING FROM THE PANDEMIC, I HOPE YOU WILL JOIN ME IN RE-EMBRACING THE DAILY JOY OF OUR WORK AND IN GOING FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE THAT WE PARTICIPATE IN SOMETHING NOBLE AND MORE SUSTAINED THAN EVEN THE PROBLEMS WE CONTINUE TO CONFRONT.

David Jacoby, M.D.
Interim Dean
State Legislature Funds OHSU’s 30-30-30 Plan to Address a Health Care Workforce Shortage, Increase Education Program Diversity

This spring, the Oregon Legislature passed legislation that included a $45 million prioritized investment in OHSU’s innovative 30-30-30 plan to help address the state’s urgent health care workforce needs.

OHSU 30-30-30 will increase the number of graduates from clinical programs by 30% and increase all OHSU learner diversity to 30% by the year 2030. The $45 million investment will enable OHSU to expand culturally competent health care access in communities across the state.

It includes two parts:

- An increase of $20 million per year in OHSU’s direct state appropriation. This ongoing investment will allow OHSU to expand class sizes across its schools, graduating up to 2,000 additional health care professionals – nurses, clinical psychologists, physicians, physician assistants, nutritionists, public health leaders, and others – within the decade. It will also increase diversity through learner pathway programs such as the Oregon Consortium of Area Health Education Centers, HealthEStrips, Wy’east and OnTrack OHSU!

- A $25 million one-time investment, which the OHSU Foundation will seek to match with philanthropy, creating a $50 million OHSU Opportunity Fund. This fund will provide tuition assistance, loan repayment and student resources to help recruit and retain more diverse classes of learners at OHSU.

OHSU developed its 30-30-30 plan to help the state address the current health care workforce shortage and health care inequities that were exacerbated by COVID-19 and its disproportionate impact on underserved communities. Without action, the state projects that by 2030, Oregon is expected to need 40% more registered nurses, and 60% more nurse practitioners – even as the Oregon Health Authority’s 2021 Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment Report calls for increased workforce diversity and geographic distribution to more effectively address community health care needs.

“We’re emerging from a crisis and looking to the future,” said Oregon House Speaker Dan Rayfield. “We know that our health care workforce needs to be more diverse and more robust. Our investment in OHSU’s 30-30-30 plan is an investment in affordable education, quality jobs and healthy futures for Oregon’s families.”

“OHSU 30-30-30 will lead to a larger – and more representative – health care workforce in Oregon that understands, and can address, the unique needs of the state’s diverse and rural communities,” said David Robinson, Ph.D., OHSU interim executive vice president and provost. – SH

M.D. Program Earns Continued Accreditation

On March 1, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) affirmed the full accreditation status of the school’s M.D. Program, shifting the status from “full accreditation with an indeterminate term” to “full accreditation.”

Following a January 2020 visit to the school, the LCME found that the M.D. program’s performance was satisfactory in most elements, but also pinpointed elements requiring improvement. Subsequently, the school

- Remade the student career, academic and wellness advising system
- Provided education and training, especially for faculty and residents, regarding student concerns about mistreatment and the need for deepened accountability
- Created a comprehensive Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Strategic Action Plan
- Opened private study space for medical students in the Robertson Life Sciences Building
- Added more ways for students to give feedback on their courses and clinical experiences

The one continued area rated “unsatisfactory” is career advising, which the M.D. Program is actively addressing.

“This process has showcased the best aspects of our medical school, led to remarkable new initiatives and helped galvanize the whole institution,” said Interim Dean David Jacoby. The next LCME visit is scheduled for 2027–28. – EHB

A Rite of Passage Returns

Rebecca Cantone, M.D., assistant dean of student affairs for undergraduate medical education, helps Maliyan Binette, M.D. Class of 2024, don her white coat in the first of the medical school’s rites of passage to return to in-person status since the pandemic began. From left, Benjamin Schneider, M.D., assistant dean for student affairs, Tracy Bunsted, M.D., M.P.H., associate dean for undergraduate medical education, and Interim Dean David Jacoby look on. The M.D. Class of 2024 celebrated the completion of its White Coat Ceremony at the Robertson Life Sciences Building Feb. 11.

OHSU 30-30-30

The $45 million investment will allow OHSU to significantly increase the number of graduates from several key health care professions programs, including the PA program (PA Class of 2023 pictured above), adding thousands of new clinicians to the state’s hospitals and clinics over the next decade.
M.D. Class of 2022 and OHSU Residency Programs Post 100% Match

At 9 a.m. on March 18, students in the M.D. Class of 2022 ripped open their match envelopes in 23 specialties in 32 states – including 28% of the class students matching to a residency program. Students matched the culminating moment in person.

For more than 93% of the class, March 18 also marked the end of their last day of medical school. Because of the school's time-variable, competency-based curriculum, the majority of fourth-year students complete their graduation requirements by the end of the third quarter. OHSU's 23 residency programs that take part in the match also posted a 100% match rate, with 191 out of 191 slots filled, by the end of the third quarter.

For two years of virtual Match Day gatherings, students and their loved ones were able to come together to celebrate the culminating moment in person. The M.D. Class of 2022 posted a 100% match rate, with all 149 students matching to a residency program. Students matched 23 specialties in 32 states – including 28% of the class matching in Oregon, the highest percentage of any state. (View additional statistics in the below infographic.)

For more than 93% of the class, March 18 also marked their last day of medical school. Because of the school’s time-variable, competency-based curriculum, the majority of fourth-year students complete their graduation requirements by the end of the third quarter. OHSU’s 23 residency programs that take part in the match also posted a 100% match rate, with 191 out of 191 slots filled, including the new transitional year program that prepares physicians for entry into specialties such as radiology, anesthesiology, ophthalmology, dermatology, radiation oncology, and others.

The dual 100% match rates are indicators of OHSU’s strong national reputation. “As you step into this next chapter, remember that you’re not alone,” said Craig Swinyard, senior director of alumni engagement. “Approximately 1,500 OHSU alums have graduated in just the past 10 years, and they’re ready to serve as a resource to you.” (Learn more about Swinyard on p. 20.) – MP

WHAT’S NEW IN THE SCHOOL

Beth Habecker, Ph.D., professor of chemical physiology and biochemistry, received one of the top honors from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). On Jan. 26, she was named an AAAS Fellow in the pharmaceutical sciences sector for distinguished contributions elucidating the roles of the sympathetic nervous system in cardiovascular disease.

Yali Jia, Ph.D., developed an algorithm that greatly improved the sensitivity of a highly efficient, non-invasive eye imaging technology called optical coherence tomographic angiography, or OCTA. For that and other significant contributions, the National Academy of Inventors elected Dr. Jia, the Jennie P. Weeks Professor of Ophthalmology and an associate professor of biomedical engineering, a National Academy of Inventors Senior Member.

A study led by Fikadu Tafesse, Ph.D., assistant professor of molecular microbiology and immunology, found more than one path to robust immunity from COVID-19. Two forms of immunity – breakthrough infections following vaccination or natural infection followed by vaccination - provide roughly equal levels of enhanced immune protection. In both cases, the immune response measured in blood serum revealed antibodies that were equally more abundant and at least 10 times more potent than immunity generated by vaccination alone.

A study of mice by Jacob Raber, Ph.D., professor of behavioral neuroscience, and team found that modulating the gut microbiome via fecal implants drove behavioral and cognitive changes in an Alzheimer’s model. The findings suggest new avenues involving the use of probiotics to treat and potentially forestall symptoms of dementia associated with neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer’s.

GUT MICROBIOME

Image of a mouse brain showing hallmarks of Alzheimer’s disease (plaques in blue). Research of mice by Dr. Jacob Raber (below) and team suggests the gut microbiome could be a path toward treating or forestalling cognitive decline.

Following Investigation, OHSU Commits to Culture Change

In December, Covington & Burling LLP concluded its eight-month investigation into OHSU’s institutional culture. The firm, led by Eric Holder, 82nd U.S. Attorney General, was retained by OHSU to investigate its culture in response to incidents of racial and gender discrimination and harassment at the university.

“Covington’s findings show how challenging the work environment has been for some OHSU members and let us be clear: just one person experiencing inequitable treatment, discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation or retaliation is one too many,” said OHSU President Danny Jacobs in a statement. “It is clear that we have a significant amount of work to do, in addition to efforts currently underway, to overcome the past and change the future so that OHSU can become a place where everyone can thrive.”

To address the findings, OHSU:
• Convened an implementation committee focused on planning and adoption of Covington’s recommendations with metrics and milestones for measuring progress that will be regularly shared with our members.
• Created an oversight committee to ensure accountability that will report to the president, board of directors and implementation committee.

Learn more at news.ohsu.edu.
Hungry No More

Student food insecurity shocked the OHSU community. Students and faculty launched an effort to do something about it.

Written by Romel Hernandez; photos by Aaron Bieleck

NOURISHMENT
Nicky Ulrich, left, oversees OHSU’s new Food Resource Center, helped by student leaders like Gina Calco, an M.D./Ph.D. student.

about once a week, Marin Miner makes time in her hectic graduate student schedule to swing by the OHSU Food Resource Center and stock up on items like olive oil, meatless burgers and fresh veggies. Living on a stipend and without a car to get to supermarkets easily, she considers the center more than a mere convenience.

“It’s an indispensible resource for reducing the strain on your budget and on your time,” said the first-year biomedical sciences Ph.D. student, originally from San Diego. “There have been some weeks where I haven’t been able to go food shopping and had to scrounge a little, making quesadillas or eating whatever was in the freezer. I definitely find that more regular trips to the center means a better and healthier diet.”

Since launching in December 2020, the FRC has distributed free groceries – pantry staples, organic produce, microwavable meals, even a variety of specialty items – to over 1,000 individual students. Located on the OHSU Student Center’s first floor, the center offers both in-person shopping and online ordering for students only, regardless of financial need.

Recent OHSU surveys indicate that 1 in 4 students experienced some level of food insecurity over the course of the previous year. Nationally, over 30 percent of college/university students report being food insecure. (See the USDA definition of “food insecurity” in sidebar p. 11.)

“Everyone’s situation is unique, and a range of factors contribute to student food security,” explained Nicky Ulrich, M.N.M., M.A., Food Resource Center coordinator. “Student demographics have evolved over time as OHSU becomes more socioeconomically diverse with more first-generation students and students caring for families – such as children or aging parents. Faced with rising tuition costs, students on financial aid are essentially living on fixed incomes in an area with a high – and rising – cost of living. This can make it difficult to adapt to unexpected expenses and can result in uncertainty around how to afford basics like food.”

On top of economic pressures, students’ rigorous academic schedules leave precious little time for grocery shopping (especially with few supermarkets close by), planning or cooking meals—and even eating.

Food insecurity “isn’t a new problem – it’s a problem we’re finally recognizing and coming to grips with,” said Diane Studler, Ph.D., R.D.N., L.D., professor of medicine and director of the school’s graduate programs in human nutrition. “There’s a stereotype of grad students surviving on ramen, and it doesn’t have to be that way. We’ve become more aware that food insecurity is a root cause of stress and anxiety. The well-being of our students shouldn’t be compromised because they weren’t able to eat breakfast.”

Jodi Demunter, M.D., assistant professor of medicine, who worked in a community clinic in a low-income area before becoming medical director of the Student Health and Wellness Center, was shocked to find the problem was so widespread at OHSU. She helped oversee a food insecurity task force formed to study the issue and propose solutions, including the FRC. The group also advocated for a 10% student discount at on-campus cafes and trained a cadre of student and staff volunteers to educate students about expanded eligibility for federal food benefits in response to the pandemic.

“Our students are in programs that keep them busy all day, every day, with classes, labs, practicums and clinical rotations,” Dr. Demunter said. “We have to meet their basic needs, or they won’t be successful academically.”

It is fitting that two students – Gina Calco, a sixth-year M.D./Ph.D. student from Michigan, and Madison Egan, a fourth-year M.D. student from Portland, Ore. – were among the driving forces behind the FRC’s creation.

After COVID-19 hit campus in the spring of 2020, Calco...
Food insecurity “isn’t a new problem – it’s a problem we’re finally recognizing and coming to grips with.”

---

Dr. Diane Stadler

and Egan, who met through the food insecurity task force, launched a free grocery delivery service for their fellow students. With a modest start-up grant from the Student Health and Wellness Center, they operated out of their own homes, stockpiling food items and delivering boxes. The grassroots venture proved popular enough to evolve into what has become a full-fledged food resource center, supported with funding from the OHSU Foundation and OHSU, as well as employee donations through payroll deductions.

Growing up, Calco says she experienced food insecurity and qualified for free school lunches as her family, at times, struggled to make ends meet. At OHSU she saw many of her fellow medical students facing similar challenges, and often found herself attending random campus events just to get free food.

“There’s a misperception that all students are privileged,” Calco says. “But many students may be struggling with a lack of access to food. Some may be working 20 or 30 hours a week to support their education. It’s challenging to navigate the system and keep the basics covered.”

The 600 square-foot FRC is designed to promote a welcoming and culturally affirming shopping experience. The 600 square-foot Food Resource Center is designed to promote a welcoming and culturally affirming shopping experience.

OPEN DOOR

The 600 square-foot Food Resource Center is designed to promote a welcoming and culturally affirming shopping experience.

For Calco and Egan, it’s been especially gratifying to see how students suggested carrying Spam, the center made sure to carry the canned-meat product because it has cultural relevance in some Asian and Pacific Islander cuisines and reminds students of home.

Dr. Stadler herself makes weekly shopping runs to stock up on items not provided by the pantry’s main sources of food. Overall, the emphasis is on healthier alternatives – organic and non-processed foods are best, of course, and there isn’t much “junk” food, though the center does aim to please all palates.

The FRC staff makes a special effort to solicit feedback from its campus cafes, food that would otherwise go to waste. The microwaveable meals are one of the more popular items on the menu, as well as vegan options. Shelves are stocked with non-processed foods as well as vegan alternatives such as soy and oat milk and gluten-free options. Students can also find household products, including laundry detergent and toilet paper. The center has plans to start providing kitchenware as a way to support students’ ability to cook at home.

The center’s success is a jumping-off point for exploring other ways OHSU might better meet students’ basic needs, Dr. Demunter notes, such as expanding housing support or establishing a student emergency fund to provide limited emergency financial assistance to students who are unable to meet essential expenses due to a temporary or unexpected hardship.

For Calco and Egan, it’s been especially gratifying to see how something that started out as a small project by well-meaning students can make such a big difference – and keep on going even after they graduate.

“Shoppers are not required to prove financial hardship; they can fill one box or bag at a time any time they shop.

Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.” said Shannon Baker, a nursing student from Albany, Ore., who is solo parenting. She was unsure if the center only served those experiencing severe hardship. “My budget is tight and we don’t have much extra, but we’re also not going hungry. Shopping at the center has been a very positive experience – I’d encourage anyone to go.”

Looking to the future, the FRC hopes to extend its reach to the South Waterfront campus and OHSU’s rural campuses. Ulrich is also exploring ways to expand offerings, including hosting events such as cooking demonstrations. “This space,” she said, “has created its own community where folks can shop together and talk. I’ve seen students meet up here with classmates they only knew from their online courses.”

Food insecurity isn’t a new problem – it’s a problem we’re finally recognizing and coming to grips with.
Dr. Todd Taylor stumbled upon an ‘introduction to genetics’ course – something that really sparked his interest. “I wished I’d discovered it earlier,” he said. It was the late ’80s, and genetics was a burgeoning field of research. But as fate would have it, his life took a few twists and turns; he got married and taught English in Japan for a couple of years.

But the interest in genetics was always in the back of his mind. After finishing his second teaching year in Japan, he and his wife returned to the U.S., where he applied to the Ph.D. program in molecular and medical genetics at OHSU. He was accepted as one of only three graduate students in the program – and that intimate level of learning suited him well. “I really liked the fact that the program was so small,” he said. “That’s where I worked with Susan Hayflick and really enjoyed my time there. I had very little background knowledge in biology when I first started, so I really appreciated Susan’s and my other mentor’s patience with me.”

Just before graduating from college in mathematics, Dr. Taylor stumbled upon an ‘introduction to genetics’ course – something that really sparked his interest.

“I wished I’d discovered it earlier,” he said. It was the late ’80s, and genetics was a burgeoning field of research. But as fate would have it, his life took a few twists and turns; he got married and taught English in Japan for a couple of years.

Dr. Taylor created tools that facilitated the painstaking work of localizing the gene to a chromosomal region. “He brought a level of creativity and energy to the work, in ways that made it a more fun and interesting project,” Dr. Hayflick recalled. “I remember he paged me on a Monday afternoon, which was really unusual for a student to do,” she said. “I came to the lab and he showed me his discovery.” They were looking for the gene for a rare genetic disease called PKAN – a degenerative disease of the brain that can lead to Parkinson disease, dystonia, dementia and ultimately death. “It was his work that got us to the gene’s general location and allowed us to pivot and actually find it,” said Dr. Hayflick.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Taylor and his now family of three moved back to Japan where he found a job at RIKEN, a major scientific research center, working with the main group of scientists toiling on the sequencing phase of the Human Genome Project. He spent the next five years assembling and analyzing three human chromosomes. After the Human Genome Project was completed in 2003, he extended his genomic research expertise to other species, including chimpanzees and mice. Over time, computer-driven capabilities advanced the field in remarkable ways, making it possible to sequence genomes anywhere, in any environment – including the human microbiome. In 2008, he and several scientists from the Human Genome Project formed the International Human Microbiome Consortium (IHMC), a research collaboration that brings together the most renowned scientists and researchers in the microbiota field.

As Dr. Taylor’s career wound down at RIKEN in 2020, he continued to maintain connections with the microbiome lab as a visiting scientist. He’s still on the steering committee for the IHMC and works with post-doc students who are researching the relationship between gut microbes and immunology.

Dr. Taylor also continues to give lectures a couple times a year on the Human Genome Project. He laughs when he says “Now I talk with students who weren’t even born before the Human Genome Project was finished. With current computers and sequencing technology, they could probably do my Ph.D. in a week!” While that may be true, students today continue to use the laboratory techniques that Taylor helped pioneer at the dawn of the genetic revolution. – Karen Bishop

He’s an incredibly generous, upbeat and open person – and a very natural teacher.

- Dr. Susan Hayflick

Dr. Taylor carried his scientific passion across the sea to Japan where he helped sequence the Human Genome Project.
Cartographer of Cardiology

Dr. Aslan maps the biology of blood in hopes of developing better therapeutics for vascular conditions.

JOSEPH ASLAN, PH.D. ’09, M.S. ’12
EARLY CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Dr. Joseph Aslan discovered a liking for science, specifically chemistry and biology, but he discovered a passion for the lab life at UC Berkeley. He worked for two years as an undergraduate researcher before graduating with a degree in biochemistry and molecular biology in 2000. He stayed two more years at Berkeley, working as a staff researcher before traveling north to graduate school at OHSU, lured by the stellar neuroscience coming out of the Vollum Institute. In 2009, he earned a Ph.D. in neurobiology.

Initially, Dr. Aslan planned to continue studying molecular neuroscience, he says, but during a postdoctoral fellowship in the bioengineering lab of Owen McCoy, Ph.D., he alighted on his life’s work: the mystery of blood cells.

“I quickly became interested in platelet biology because there was a lot of work to do in terms of understanding how proteins and signaling pathways in platelets relate to health and disease,” said Dr. Aslan, now an assistant professor of medicine in the school’s Division of Cardiovascular Medicine. Today, Dr. Aslan is a rising star cardiovascular scientist who uses state-of-the-art proteomics and computational biology tools to map the critical relationships between signaling pathways in platelets and other immune cells in order to improve treatments for vascular diseases.

“He works tirelessly at his craft,” observed Dr. McCoy. In a notable study published last year in the American Journal of Physiology-Cell Physiology, the Aslan Lab was the first to define the effects of kinase inhibitors on platelets.

“As signaling proteins in blood cells, spleen tyrosine kinase (Syk) and Bruton’s tyrosine kinase (BTK) help orchestrate inflammation and immunity as well as blood clotting or hemostasis,” explained Dr. Aslan. “Over the past decade, several different inhibitor drugs against Syk and BTK have been approved to treat inflammatory and immune disorders as well as hematologic malignancies. But they can have bleeding-related complications.”

Why and how? his lab wondered. Through a clever approach to comparing different inhibitors, the research team uncovered the physiological mechanisms by which these agents interfere with platelet signaling and function. The nationally recognized work helps address a growing need to better understand the effects of such compounds on our molecular machinery in order to reduce unwanted complications.

One secret to Dr. Aslan’s success is his collaborative style. “I truly understand how collaboration opens up new avenues and moves the science forward,” said colleague Norah Verbout, Ph.D. ’08. – Rachel Shafer

He works tirelessly at his craft.

─ Dr. Owen McCoy

Anthony has proven himself to be an outstanding collaborator who easily synthesizes input from a diverse group of people to solve problems and make decisions.

─ Dr. Heather Angier

Bringing His Whole Self into the Room

Dr. Cheng’s leadership skills are just a part of who he is.

ANTHONY CHENG, M.D. ’16
EARLY CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

When COVID-19 hit in March 2020, Dr. Anthony Cheng, assistant professor of family medicine in the school, remembers how quickly hierarchies flattened and silos fell apart. Practically overnight OHSU became collaborative and nimble, he says, drawing upon the expertise of people from all over the organization and around the world.

“In many ways, it was an exhilarating time,” Dr. Cheng said. “I felt grateful for being able to translate the fear and anxiety I felt about the pandemic into something productive.”

While many people could call their primary care physician (PCPs) for advice about the new disease, Dr. Cheng knew that 25% of Oregonians don’t have a PCP. “Maybe they live in an underserved rural area, maybe they have limited English proficiency, or they’re hesitant to enroll in care due to their immigration status,” he said. By establishing a hotline and virtual care service, those patients would be served, too.

As fate would have it, Dr. Cheng had already been leading the development of OHSU’s virtual visit services. His expertise prompted the primary care team to recruit him as the founding medical director of what would become the COVID-19 Connected Care Center, (C4). Under his leadership, the C4 was fully funded and operational in only ten days. “Anthony is someone whose contributions in response to COVID-19 have been extraordinary and life-saving,” said Jennifer DeVoe, M.D., professor and chair of family medicine.

The experience taught Dr. Cheng what it means to be a leader. “Before, I thought a leader was someone who looked, talked and dressed a certain way, but I came to realize a leader is anyone who convenes and connects people, organizes the work and gathers a team to accomplish a goal,” he explained. “I realized I like to lead.”

His commitment to inclusion, he says, stems from knowing what it’s like to feel like an outsider. As a child of a Chinese mom and American dad growing up in Hershey, Pa., he was conscious of being different than other kids. This perspective drives him to think outside the box and strive to truly understand his patients. He also tries to shine a light on areas of medicine that are more on the margins, like LGBTQ+ care, addiction medicine and geriatrics.

As one of two inaugural Diversity Navigators in the M.D. program, Dr. Cheng also provides support and mentoring to medical students who request it. “The idea is to support a more diverse workforce by making sure, as physicians develop their identities, they don’t leave behind who they are,” said Cheng.

“It’s when physicians bring their whole selves into the room that they are at their best.” – Karen Bishop

─ Karen Bishop
Sending Out Ripples of Care

Dr. Hollander-Rodriguez is a strong voice for rural communities.

JOYCE HOLLANDER-RODRIGUEZ, M.D. ’00 R ’03
ESTHER POHL LOVEJOY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Dr. Joyce Hollander-Rodriguez grew up in a small rural community in Western Oregon, so it’s not a surprise that her life’s work focuses on rural and community health.

But it wasn’t such a straight line – when Dr. Hollander-Rodriguez’s family traveled to India and spent time overseas, she was struck by the vastness of poverty and suffering she saw. She always wanted to be of service to people, and her first thought was to do that work internationally.

But she came back to a rural setting when she did her family medicine residency at OHSU’s Cascades East campus in Klamath Falls. “I realized that there was a lot of need, and a lot of the same barriers right here,” she said, like geographic, language, financial and cultural barriers to care.

Now, as Cascades East’s residency director, Dr. Hollander-Rodriguez gets to see the ripple effect of rural health education across the state and beyond.

There is no greater advocate for rural health care and education than Joyce.

– Dr. Holly Montjoy

The Future of Ophthalmology is Bright

Dr. Wilson sees the promise of what lies ahead for the Casey Eye Institute.

DAVID J. WILSON, M.D. R ’85
CHARLES A. PREUSS DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

After 17 years as director of the Casey Eye Institute, Dr. David Wilson is retiring July 1, leaving behind a very accomplished legacy. “As chairman and director, he’s had a vision for the Institute and took bold steps to achieve that,” said long-time colleague and friend Dr. Holly Montjoy, M.D., assistant professor and associate residency director of family medicine at Cascades East. “There is no greater advocate for rural health care and education than Joyce.”

The list of boards and committees Dr. Hollander-Rodriguez serves on is long. She’s a strong voice for rural communities at OHSU, say peers, and a trusted one for OHSU’s mission of teaching and learning in Klamath Falls.

She doesn’t take all the credit for this honor, though. “I’m so grateful for all the people I lean on,” said Dr. Hollander-Rodriguez. “I’m standing on the shoulders of all the amazing people who created this program – this sort of success is never a solo effort.” – Amber Hollingsworth
Reflections on Today’s Work Life

Comics by Jason McDermott, Ph.D. ‘00, @RedPen/BlackPen

“I’ve always doodled, but I never considered myself to be an artist,” said Pacific Northwest National Laboratory computational scientist Jason McDermott, Ph.D. ‘00.

“Then one day a colleague made a metaphor that struck me so well, I had to draw it out. Great metaphors make great comics. When I posted it online, I received such positive feedback, I wanted to create more.”

Since then, the comic artist has posted hundreds of his creations to his Twitter account @RedPen/BlackPen, which has over 20,000 followers. Dr. McDermott’s comics depict all aspects of science, including research culture and experimental results, and have been featured in both mainstream media and scientific journals, like *Science* and *PLOS Computational Biology.*

@redpenblackpen
Two new opportunities offered this year include the School of Medicine Alumni Association’s Timely Topics webinar series and the virtual OHSU Alumni Book Club (see p. 23 calendar section). Before coming to OHSU, Swinyard spent more than a decade as an associate professor of mathematics and several years as director of alumni and parent relations at his alma mater. In his new role, Swinyard is driven to absorb and understand OHSU’s history and traditions. He is just as driven by his life goal of running a marathon in every state in the U.S. To date, he has finished 22 marathons in 19 states.

Mark Kemball has contributed to community building at OHSU for nearly 30 years, first working in OHSU’s Community Relations office and then in communications for the School of Medicine. He has spent the past 11 years as OHSU’s alumni director. He is a relationship builder as well as his team’s source for all aspects of OHSU history and culture. Kemball advises and supports all of OHSU’s alumni boards and councils. Outside of the OHSU community, this man of diverse skills has hiked the Inca Trail in Peru and conducted a university chamber choir at Disneyland.

Anna Lageson recently joined the team as associate director of digital alumni engagement. After 12 years with the University of Portland’s marketing and communications team, Lageson is focused on meeting and listening to OHSU students and alumni, Swinyard and his team have met students and with the university. To understand the wants and needs of alumni, Swinyard and his team have met with alumni leaders, engaged in personal one-on-one outreach and conducted an all-alumni survey. With over 20,000 graduates of the School of Medicine alone, there are countless alumni interests represented within the alumni community. Swinyard wants it known that if alumni have ideas for alumni engagement through work groups. The new work groups will oversee and accomplish a single, time-delimited task; most work group activity is open to all alumni via remote meetings. Work groups are currently forming around Awards, Admissions, Career Advising and Students Today Alumni Tomorrow programming. Email alumni@ohsu.edu to learn more.

Hi! We’re Your New Alumni Engagement Team, At Your Service

The OHSU Foundation’s new senior director of alumni engagement, Craig Swinyard, says his goal is to help alumni engage with each other, with current students and with the university. As the newest member of the team, Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement Hayden Rahn spent six years nurturing the development and growth of a national fraternal organization at colleges and universities. Rahn is now focused on experiential engagement and building community at OHSU, helping alumni organize their class reunions and connecting with current students as they transition into the larger alumni community. He is also committed to visiting every state in the union by the age of 30, and has only five to go.

Swinyard wants it known that if alumni have ideas for a gathering, event or continuous learning, “we value your perspectives, please contact us at alumni@ohsu.edu. The alumni engagement team is here for you, so you can be there for each other.” – Anna Lageson

Opportunities Abound with Your Alumni Council

Are you able to help the school assess future physicians? The M.D. Program Admissions Office is looking for volunteers to become raters of M.D. program applicants in the multiple mini interview (MMI), a series of short interviews with standardized scenarios and questions. Volunteers should be physicians (practicing or retired), providers, nurses, scientists or others with a connection to the health care field. Volunteers commit to a minimum of four sessions (more if possible) of rating applicants between August 2022 and March 2023. Volunteers can select the days that work best for them. Each session is 3.5 to 4-hours long and primarily on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. The scoring is completed during the session, and there is minimal preparation required ahead of time. This cycle, all MMIs will be virtual, including a virtual training process. For additional information or to volunteer, please contact Kari Kriedberg at mdinterviews@ohsu.edu.

Maj or Milestone

2000s
Laura Pompel Jorden, M.D. ’01, returned to the Pacific Northwest in December 2020 from Shanghai's United Family Hospital, where she was chair of infection control before becoming chief of the hospital's family medicine department. She continues to direct the “Tending the Flame” course on resiliency and work satisfaction for fellows. Dr. Jorden started a new role as primary care provider for Daimler Trucks of North America in April 2022.

► Pediatrician Travis Riddell, M.D., M.P.H. ’06, was reappointed as the Teton District Health Officer for Teton County, Wyo, in December. He completed his pediatrics training at the Boston Combined Residency Program and was a teaching fellow at Boston University and a clinical fellow at Harvard before moving to Jackson Hole, Wyo. Dr. Riddell and his wife Annie have two children, Case and Lauren. Dr. Riddell hikes, bikes, climbs and backcountry skis from the Teton Range to the Himalaya.

2010s
Paul DeMuro, M.B.I. ’10, Ph.D. ’12, a biomedical informatics graduate, has joined Nossaman LLP in Austin, Texas, as an “of counsel” attorney. He was previously chief legal officer of health and wellness for the Royal Palm Companies in Miami, Fla.

Jackie Wirz, Ph.D. ’10, has been appointed the executive director of Donate Life Northwest. Dr. Wirz will lead the health care nonprofit to provide education, outreach and advocacy for organ, eye and tissue donation.

► Stefanie Linch, Ph.D. ’11, wrote, “Realizing that my passion for science and my general strengths were not most effectively used at the bench, I tried a number of different career paths – freelance manuscript editor, adjunct faculty, nonprofit grant writer and fundraiser and scientific writer. I’m currently focusing on team science and effective collaboration in cancer early detection as an associate scientist and facilitator at OHSU Knight Cancer Institute.”

Continuing Professional Development

In Memoriam
Cecile S. Beyl, M.D. R ’70, of Upland, Calif., died Dec. 1, 2021, at age 86.

Carol S. Bogardus, M.D. ’77 R ’80, of Portland, Ore., died Jan. 30, 2022, at age 78.


Gilbert W. Byers, M.D. ’52, of Walnut Creek, Calif., died Feb. 1, 2022, at age 95.

Alfonso D. Calhoun, M.D. R ’78, of Albany, Ga., died Nov. 14, 2021, at age 78.

Donald D. Denney, M.D. ’78 R ’85 of Portland, Ore., died Feb. 27, 2022, at age 91.


Noel L. Hoell, M.D. R ’65, of Missoula, Mont., died Feb. 19, 2022, at age 82.


Larry J. Maukonen, M.D. R ’75 of Medford, Ore., died Dec. 10, 2021, at age 76.

Kenneth A. Solen, Ph.D. ’76, of Orem, Utah, died Nov. 5, 2021, at age 74.


David W. Wilder, M.D. ’66 R ’71 of Allison Park, Pa., died Jan. 7, 2022, at age 82.

Additional in memoriam entries are at www.ohsu.edu/alumni.
You carry the light of hope

OHSU School of Medicine alumni are healers, teachers, scientists, researchers and visionaries committed to improving lives through improving health care for our whole community. You listen with empathy, offer innovative treatment and continuously push for discoveries, seeking new methods to bring comfort and healing to all.

The OHSU Alumni Engagement team is committed to building a thriving alumni community by providing meaningful opportunities for you to connect and share your knowledge, passion, memories and friendship.

We are here for you so you can be there for each other