Gala to Reach New Heights

More than 330 people are expected to attend the 3rd Annual Scholarship Gala on October 29.

Held this year at the Fairmont Copley Plaza hotel in Boston’s Back Bay, it has exceeded the records for attendance and dollars raised set in first two years of the Gala, which was begun in 2007 to raise funds for scholarships for deserving Institute students.

“We’re very excited to be in a new location as well as fortunate to have such a great response in these uncertain economic times,” said Institute President Dr. Janis P. Bellack. “It’s crucial that we continue to open doors to students who otherwise would not be able to attend the Institute.”

Jack Connors, chairman of the board of directors at Partners HealthCare, will be master of ceremonies.

Calendar of Events

November
7 – Admissions Info Session
19 – Faculty/Staff Social
26 – Thanksgiving Break
Institute Closed
30 – Institute reopens

December
3 – Board of Trustees Meeting
3 – Institute Holiday Party
4 – Board of Trustees Meeting
11 – Hanukkah begins
12 – Admissions Info Session
23 – Intersession Break begins
Institute closed
26 – Kwanza begins

January
4 – Institute reopens
11 – Classes begin
18 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Institute closed
21 – Faculty/Staff Social

From the President’s Desk

Vision, Planning, Change

As I begin my third year as president of the MGH Institute, I’m repeatedly heartened by the collective sense of community and responsibility that characterizes this institution, and its faculty, staff, students, and administrators. This quality was critical in helping us this past year as we faced a midyear budget deficit, owing to the downturn in the U.S. and local economy. Fortunately, the Institute does not rely heavily on income from its endowment as do many colleges and universities, but an unexpected drop in enrollment led to a corresponding drop in revenue from student tuition and fees, the primary source of the Institute’s annual revenue.

Despite this challenge, the entire Institute community worked successfully to control costs while upholding our core commitment to assuring academic excellence and maintaining the educational quality for which the Institute is known. Consequently, we ended the fiscal year in June with a much lower shortfall than originally projected, and are now operating with a balanced budget for the new fiscal year. I am especially happy to report that we were able to do this while also holding student tuition and fee increases to 3%, the lowest level in years.

A Bold Vision and Plan for the Future

This summer the full Institute community completed a nearly year-long process to define our desired future, craft vision and core values statements, and update our mission and strategic plan to take us through 2010. The Institute, with endorsement from its Board of Trustees, boldly aspires to become the global leader in health professions education, focused on educating its students as future leaders in their fields. Faculty-staff teams subsequently generated operational plans for each strategic priority, which were then incorporated into a set of measurable strategies that we are using to guide our work in 2009-2010.

By this January, we will complete an 18-month self-study process to prepare for a March 2010 evaluation site visit by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), our regional accrediting agency. Regional accreditation is the principal hallmark of educational quality, and ensures that our students have access to federal financial aid, and the Institute is eligible federal funds for research and program initiatives. I am confident we are well-positioned to achieve continuing accreditation, and look forward to welcoming the NEASC evaluation team to the campus.

Organizational Change

With the Institute’s growth over the past year, we determined that a different organizational structure was needed to improve communication and operations, and support achieving our strategic goals. The first step was to move from a programmatic structure to one more in line with other colleges and universities by creating two Schools – a School of Nursing and a School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHRS).

The School of Nursing encompasses our various nursing programs, while SHRS houses two departments: Physical Therapy and Communication Sciences and Disorders, and the Graduate Program in Medical Imaging. The new structure will also enhance interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching, learning, and research, and holds promise for future entrepreneurial initiatives.

The Office of Information Technology was incorporated into the larger division of Finance and Administration to better align its services with the Institute’s goals and operations.

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Trustees Add Five New Members to Their Ranks

The composition of the Board of Trustees changed this past June, as the leadership was expanded to 17 members. Five new members were welcomed and have begun their three-year term:

- D. Ari Buchler, senior vice president, general counsel, and secretary of Phase Forward Inc. in Waltham, a firm that provides integrated data management solutions for clinical trials and drug safety;
- Jeanette Ives Erickson, senior vice president for Patient Care and chief nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston;
- Oswald “Oz” Mondejar, vice president for Human Resources & Community Relations of Partners Continuing Care, Inc., the non-acute care services division of Partners HealthCare, in Boston;
- Angelleen Peters-Lewis, director of Women’s & Newborn’s Nursing and Clinical Services at Brigham & Women’s Hospital in Boston; and
- Colette Phillips, president and CEO of the public relations and marketing communications firm Colette Phillips Communications, Inc., in Boston, and a trustee at Massachusetts General Hospital.

“We are delighted to have these five exceptional individuals become members of the Board of Trustees,” said Board Chairman George E. Thibault, MD. “They are joining the board at a time of expansion at the Institute, and we look forward to their playing a key role with their wisdom and leadership skills.”

Three long-time members have become Honorary Trustees, and were cited for their service to the Institute at the June Board meeting:

- E. Lorraine Baugh, the Board’s longest-serving member, and its first Chair of the Board, for providing wise and steady stewardship from the Institute’s birth as an independent affiliate of Massachusetts General Hospital;
- John V. Guttag, for sharing his expertise in academia and research, for being Chair of the Board’s Academic and Student Affairs Committee, and for his support of the Institute’s Physical Therapy program; and
- Carol Surkin, for being Chair of Institute’s Strategic Planning Committee and the Board’s Long-range Planning Committee, and for her support of the Hanson Initiative for Language and Literacy (HILL).

Retreat Focuses On Assessment and Effectiveness

On September 10, 2009, prior to its September Board meeting, the full Board of Trustees came together in a retreat focused on board assessment and effectiveness. The retreat, the first the Board has held in several years, was conducted by Cathy Trower, PhD, from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, an expert in board governance.

Prior to the retreat, Board members individually completed a self-assessment. The collective results were compiled and shared at the retreat, which included strengths and how to improve the Board’s effectiveness. Board members then engaged in review and discussion of the Board’s three “modes:”

- Fiduciary: stewardship of the Institute’s tangible assets;
- Strategic: effective partnership with senior leadership to achieve strategic priorities; and
- Generative: attention to the Institute’s values, identity, challenges and opportunities.

With guidance from Dr. Trower, Board members reviewed best board practices, and engaged in small group sessions to address what the Board might do differently, what would propel the Board’s progress on issues, and what could hinder such progress.

From these small groups, the Board generated ideas to improve meeting focus and meaningfulness, promote robust dialogue, build a cohesive team, ensure alignment with institutional strategies, and foster accountability.

On Top of Kilimanjaro

Board Chair Dr. George Thibault fulfilled a goal when he reached the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa, on Sept. 23, 2009 at 6:25 a.m. “I really enjoyed the feeling of exhilaration, and being able to look down at the clouds at dawn,” he said of the non-technical climb to 19,331 feet. “It’s something I’ll remember forever.”
Academic Program News

The 2009-2010 academic year at the Institute promises to be an exciting one, and already we can point to several items with great pride.

We now have 900 students attending the Institute, including 393 new students. Thus, we have met or surpassed our enrollment goals for the new academic year. This allows us to educate more health care professionals who can help alleviate acute shortages while keeping tuition expenses as low as possible. To help educate this larger cohort, we have hired 11 new full-time faculty members and added several adjunct faculty.

This fall, we have begun the transition to a new courseware platform. Called Desire 2 Learn, or D2L, it offers students a greatly enhanced learning experience, and gives faculty a greater range of options to support student learning and assessment. We expect 100% of classes to be housed on D2L by January.

We have launched the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree for Nurse Executives (EDNP), designed for chief nursing officers, vice presidents, and other senior nurse leaders. Our first cohort includes eight pioneers who recognize the value of working with peers while discussing and learning about the issues that will enhance their leadership effectiveness.

In September, the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, under the direction of program director Dr. Alexandra Paul-Simon, received a $300,000 grant from the Helene Fuld Health Trust, whose mission is to support nursing students. The award will be used over the next three years to fund financial aid for our BSN students.

School of Nursing Associate Professor Janice Goodman, PhD, RN, was named a Nurse Faculty Scholar by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She was one of just 15 nurse educators from around the country to receive a three-year $350,000 award, given to “junior faculty who show outstanding promise as future leaders in academic nursing,” according to the Foundation. Her research focuses on early post-partum depression intervention for first time mothers, using an innovative approach to treat both the infant and the mother simultaneously to create better long-term outcomes.

To help faculty become more effective in pursuing research grants, we now are working with the Office of Research Administration at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital to oversee all grant management operations. This includes all pre-award work such as grant preparation and grant submissions, as well as post-award functions such as budget tracking and agency reporting.

New Web Site, Logo Unveiled

The MGH Institute completed its overhaul of its new Web site on September 1, which included revising the Institute’s primary logo to better reflect the academic mission of the school.

The new Web site, developed by the Boston firm iFactory, was designed to give prospective students a better view of the advantages of attending the MGH Institute.

“Prospective students today get most of their information from Web sites,” said Christopher D. Hartley, Executive Director of Institute Advancement, who chaired the Web Redesign Steering Committee. “Our new site gives online visitors a much better understanding of the Institute and will help us in our recruitment efforts for students, as well as new faculty.”

The new logo, which was unveiled simultaneously, incorporates the main elements of the Institute’s official seal while retaining the same typeface and tagline of the prior logo.

New Faculty

School of Nursing
Maureen Banks, MS, MBS, RN, CNNA, CHE: Clinical Assistant Professor
Jean M. Bernhardt, BSN, MSN, MHA, FNP: Clinical Assistant Professor
Kerry Decker, MSN, APN-BC, WHNP-BC, CHES: Clinical Instructor
Daniel Kane, RN, MS: Assistant Professor
Karen A. Laliberte, RN, MS: Clinical Instructor
Patrice Nicholas, DNSc, MPH, MS, BSN, RN-C: Professor
Michael Nickerson, MS, RN, FNP-BC: Instructor
Mertie Potter, DNP, RN: Clinical Professor

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Suzanne Danforth, MS, CCC-SLP: Clinical Instructor
Margaret Rockcastle, PhD, CCC-SLP: Clinical Assistant Professor
Lauryn Zipse, PhD: Assistant Professor

Department of Physical Therapy
Laura Busick, PT, DPT, MS, NCS: Clinical Assistant Professor
Kelly K. Macauley, DPT, GCS, CCS: Clinical Instructor

Interdisciplinary
Anthony J. Guarino, PhD: Professor

Faculty Promotions
Janice Goodman, RN, PhD, PMHCNS-BC, to rank of Associate Professor
Ellen Long-Middleton, RN, PhD, FNP-BC, to rank of Clinical Associate Professor
Nancy M. Terres, RN, PhD, BC, to rank of Clinical Associate Professor
Atlas Evans, formerly director of Finance and Administration, was promoted to Vice President of Finance and Administration. Also, the former Office of External Relations is now the Office of Institutional Advancement to better reflect the full scope of its responsibilities, which include fundraising, public relations, marketing, and alumni affairs. Simultaneously, its director, Christopher Hartley, was promoted to Executive Director of Institutional Advancement and Chief Development Officer.

I believe these organizational changes more clearly convey the Institute’s identity and mission to our Partners’ affiliates and our higher education peers.

The New Academic Year
One of the privileges of being in the field of education is the opportunity to experience the renewal that comes with each new academic year. Witnessing the energy and commitment of our returning faculty and students while welcoming the latest group of new students is always an exciting and rejuvenating time in the ebb and flow of the academic enterprise. The Institute is especially privileged to be the home of remarkable students, supported by equally remarkable faculty and staff, and a dedicated team of senior leaders. Collectively, we gather together each fall to celebrate the start of the new year, remind ourselves of the meaningful work we do, and renew our commitment to making the Institute a premier institution of health professions education.

After graduating the largest class of students in the Institute’s history last May, we welcomed our largest class of incoming students this summer and fall. The new cohorts of Accelerated BSN and entry-level Doctor of Physical Therapy students joined us in May and June, respectively, while new students in all other programs began their studies in September. In line with our increased enrollments, we also welcomed a number of new faculty members (listed on Page 3).

We also have expanded the group of leaders who help shape the future direction of the Institute. Following the retirement of three long-serving Trustees, we welcomed five new members to our governing board (full list on Page 2) – including four of whom hold key leadership roles within the Partners HealthCare system. Their addition to the 17-member Board, under the continued leadership of Chair Dr. George Thibault, will be instrumental in strengthening our ties and opportunities within the Partners system. Our fifth new Trustee joins us from the corporate sector, bringing valuable business and entrepreneurial expertise.

Looking Forward
As you read this, the fall semester is well underway, and we are already looking ahead to new opportunities to expand the Institute’s scope, influence, and impact. With our newly crafted vision of becoming the global leader in health professions education, I am confident we have the talent, the will, and the support needed to achieve our lofty goals.

As always, I welcome your questions and suggestions at jbellack@mghihp.edu.

Janis P. Bellack, PhD, RN, FAAN
President and John Hilton Knowles Professor