

From the Dean



William Cathcart-Rake, M.D.

On July 28, eight new members of the KU School of Medicine Class of 2018 started classes on the Salina campus—the first time Salina has had medical students in all four years. The past three years have gone by quickly and I have thoroughly enjoyed participating in the development of a rural regional medical campus. It has been especially gratifying to watch the eight students of Salina’s Class of 2015—our first class of students—gain the knowledge and develop the professional maturity requisite to be awarded the M.D. degree and to commence with residency training. I look forward to their Hooding Ceremony and graduation in May 2015. I remember well their first weeks in Salina—the excitement of being part of something new, the media attention given to a pioneering group

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Scope, the University of Kansas School of Medicine–Salina newsletter, is published three times a year. To subscribe to the print edition, call (785) 822-0411 or email mgordon2@kumc.edu. To subscribe to the electronic version, visit <http://www.kumc.edu/school-of-medicine/salina/newsletter.html>.



Medical students who made up the first class have begun the fourth and final year of their education.

Students in first M.D. class describe defining moments

Now in their last year, KU School of Medicine–Salina’s first students discuss defining moments that occurred during their time at the nation’s smallest medical school.

“My defining moment during medical school was during my entire third year,” said Tyson Wisinger. “The dedicated attending physicians that Salina provides, along with the diversity of patients that I have encountered, have helped mold my clinical abilities and allowed me to grow professionally.”

The hands-on experience of third-year clinicals was a memorable time for Kayla Johnson, Claire Hinrichsen and Rany Gilpatrick as well.

Johnson delivered a baby while on clinical rotation in her third year. Her delivery room experience was quite personal, and it was one she was able to share with family.

“The greatest moment of my span as a medical student is when I had the honor of delivering my nephew/godson,” said Johnson. “The emotions that overcame me were full of pride and joy. I was fortunate to be on a family medicine rural rotation at the right time. It was a special moment for my sister, mom and I to share. The attending was my former family doctor and is a great teacher.”

Hinrichsen also delivered a baby during her rotation, and the experience solidified her desire to practice obstetrics.

“During my obstetrics-gynecology rotation in January, I delivered a baby in the bed just before the resident and attending made it into the room,” she said. “It was

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Cathcart-Rake named dean of KU School of Medicine—Salina campus

William Cathcart-Rake, M.D., director of the University of Kansas School of Medicine campus in Salina, has been named campus dean.

School of Medicine Executive Dean Robert Simari, M.D., announced the promotion at a campus dinner at Salina Country Club on July 22. The announcement was made as the inaugural class of KU School of Medicine—Salina students began its fourth and final year of medical education. As director, Cathcart-Rake has overseen all aspects of the medical education Salina students receive.

“With the fourth class of incoming students, the Salina campus is fully subscribed and the entire community anticipates the graduation of the first class in the spring,” Simari said. “As such it is fitting to have named Dr. Cathcart-Rake as the dean of the University of Kansas School of Medicine. As dean he will continue his educational leadership of the campus including its growth in the missions of scholarship and outreach.”

The School of Medicine created the campus to meet the state’s growing need for more doctors. Kansas ranks 39th among the 50 states in the number of physicians per capita. The opening of the campus in 2011, and an expansion of an existing medical education program in Wichita, allowed the School of Medicine, the only medical school in Kansas, to increase its first-year student class size from 175 to 211.

Students who attend the Salina campus receive basic science lectures from the main campus in Kansas City via live, interactive television. Labs and small group

discussions are led by Cathcart-Rake and other members of the on-site faculty, as well as community physicians. Students receive clinical training at Salina Regional Health Center and other locations across Kansas.

The campus reached its full enrollment of 32 students in July, when the eight students in the Class of 2018 arrived for orientation.

“I am both humbled and honored by my elevation to a campus dean,” Cathcart-Rake said. “I am grateful to my colleagues on the Kansas City and Wichita campuses for supporting me and the Salina campus. The success of the Salina campus has been a team effort. The naming of a campus dean for Salina is also an affirmation of the tireless work in the pursuit of academic excellence by the KU School of Medicine—Salina faculty, staff and students.”

An oncologist, Cathcart-Rake began practicing medicine in Salina in 1979. He compiled a lengthy record of classroom and clinical instruction before being asked to serve as the KU School of Medicine—Salina’s first director. He retired from practice in 2013 in order to devote more time to his responsibilities at the school. He remains clinically active as a volunteer attending faculty member at the Smoky Hill Family Medicine Residency Program, supervising a clinic one afternoon a week.



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of students attending the nation’s smallest medical school campus, and the anxiety associated with realizing how demanding medical school would be. Our first eight students were up to the challenge, and they persevered despite the lack of upperclassmen on campus to guide the way. These young men and women took a chance that the new Salina campus would provide the excellent medical education promised. I believe we are delivering on this promise.

According to my preliminary poll, six of the eight are very interested in residencies in primary care (family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics). It will be at least four years before we learn where our first class of students will practice, but most of them have voiced an interest in eventually practicing in rural Kansas. I hope you read the

featured story in this newsletter, in which the students in the Class of 2015 comment on defining moments in their medical school experience.

A couple of months ago, Dr. Robert Simari, the new executive dean for KU School of Medicine, claimed I had the best job in the medical school. This allowed me to do some reflecting of my own. What did he mean? He recognized the special nature of the Salina campus—the opportunities I have to work closely with each student in our small classes, to observe their maturation as medical professionals, to help them through trying times and celebrate their successes. I have to agree with him—I have a great job, and I have a great group of colleagues in Salina, Kansas City and Wichita that have helped me and contributed to our success.



Members of the Class of 2015 pose for a group photo on their first day of medical school in 2011. (From left): Tyson Wisinger, Sara Ritterling, Daniel Linville, Rany Gilpatrick, Kayla Johnson, Claire Hinrichsen, Erik Dill and Jill Corpstein.

at that moment I knew that I wanted to go into ob-gyn."

Like Hinrichsen, Gilpatrick's clinical rotation also helped her discover her field of interest.

"It was during my first week of pediatrics rotation with Dr. (Alisa) Bridge when I started to consider pediatrics as a career choice, and by the end of the third week, I knew pediatrics would be a great fit for me," Gilpatrick said. "It was rewarding to work with kids every day and to know that even as a medical student, I could have some impact in their lives. In fact, some of my favorite moments were in the newborn unit where I felt like I was a part of an exciting beginning."

It wasn't just the young patients who left lasting impressions on students. For Sara Ritterling, her first patient encounter on the first day of her third year was one she'll never forget.

"Starting rotations was scary, and having to work with actual patients was a little nerve-racking," she said. "My attending assigned me to my first patient, and they just happened to be a convicted felon, shackled to the bed. I figured it was some sort of test! But I came to know and spend a lot of time

with this patient. The patient trusted me, even though I had only been working in the hospital for a few days. I think I learned a lot about working with people and why I love it and medicine in general. I think third year showed me just how strong a person I can be."

Daniel Linville's memorable lesson came while caring for a comatose patient who did not regain consciousness. The patient had a history of substance abuse and arrests. No family came to his side. Linville said the case provided a "fragile reminder" of how easily a caregiver can fall into the trap of looking down on a patient. "It is to me a moment upon which to reflect and remind myself that from the lowly and poor of society to the affluent and rich, all are created equal and deserve full respect and the best treatment," Linville said.

While most students were moved by patient encounters, Erik Dill and Jill Corpstein recalled memories outside of the clinical setting that shaped their future plans.

Dill's defining moment comes from experiences that helped him find his passion for pathology and the

mechanisms behind diseases.

"I knew nearly nothing about the field of pathology until our first histopathology lab led by Dr. (Boyd) Smith. Given my background in basic science research, I was familiar with histological techniques and staining methods, but had never considered the breadth of its direct application to medicine," he said.

"I remember meeting with Dr. Smith one afternoon to discuss the career and being unexpectedly intrigued, as I had entered medical school mainly considering family medicine. Since that time, every experience with pathology, whether in the classroom or the clinic, has reaffirmed this interest. There's a unique history behind the field and an incredible depth of innovation in its future, and I very much look forward to being a part of it."

For Corpstein, spending six weeks in a small Kansas community rekindled her aspiration for becoming a rural physician.

"Between first and second year of medical school, I spent six weeks in a rural town, population two thousand. I was able to see what I can offer small towns as a family physician. I joined a walk/run group, volunteered with vacation Bible school and became a library card holder," she said.

"I see abundant potential in a rural area where I can easily integrate myself in the community and encounter people on multiple levels, whether in clinic or at a sporting event. As a future physician, I can entwine preventive medicine with an already established/walk run group. Returning to a small town reignited my desire to practice medicine in a rural area."

A variety of indelible moments have helped each Salina campus student discover a passion, remember compassion, experience personal pride or realize inner strength.

As Ritterling said, "It's amazing the kind of changes you can make in one year."

The Spotlight

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: CHRISTOPHER GRABER, M.D.



Christopher Graber, M.D.

Originally from Newton, Kan., Christopher Graber graduated from the University of Kansas School of Medicine–Wichita in 2005. He trained in obstetrics and gynecology at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita

before joining the Salina Women’s Clinic in 2009.

Graber says he likes being an obstetrician because it allows him to practice different types of medicine. Most days, he sees patients in his clinic, providing the continuity of care similar to that of a family physician. On other days, he’s in the operating room, performing C-sections and hysterectomies.

“I really enjoy connecting with my patients,” he said. “Doing deliveries is probably the best part of my job. Being there at that special moment means a lot to me. At the same time, I get to do some surgeries. I get to be more of a specialist some days than others.”

As the ob-gyn clerkship director, Graber works closely with Salina students when they are in their third year. “I have a student with me for two weeks straight,” he said. “They do everything and see everything that I do.”

Graber believes that Salina students receive more hands-on training than their peers on other campuses, where students typically perform their clerkships in groups of six or eight. “Here in Salina, it’s two students and a lot of one-of-one time with an attending physician,” he said.

Away from his practice, Graber enjoys cooking, sports and live theater. He

attends and occasionally performs in Salina Community Theatre productions. He played Juror No. 5 in a recent staging of the drama “12 Angry Men.”

What the medical students like about the ob-gyn clerkship: As a general rule, students like doing stuff. They like being involved and getting their hands dirty.

How the Salina students’ experience is different from his medical education: They get a better picture of what my life is like. Whereas, when I was a student I saw a lot of the endpoints: the delivery or the surgery, but not the work-up getting there or the relationships that were formed in the office beforehand. That’s something the students here really like. They see a patient in my office and then, two weeks later, when they are on labor and delivery, they see that same patient in labor. They already know the patient. They can say hello, and the patient recognizes them. So the patient feels more comfortable, and the student feels more comfortable with the patients.

On his love of cooking: My wife and I enjoy trying new recipes at home. Our two kids are very adventurous when it comes to food, thankfully. I can cook anything, and they will try it.

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