In the last newsletter I announced the kickoff of A Blueprint for Rural Health, the capital campaign in support of creating a new medical education building for the Salina campus. This is a joint effort of the Salina Regional Health Foundation and the Kansas University Endowment Association. The goal is to raise $7,563,000 to purchase the former Bank of America building in downtown Salina, completely gut the inside of the structure and reconstruct and furnish a modern, state-of-the-art medical education building. To date, we have raised approximately $7.2M in gifts and pledges toward our goal. I speak for our entire institution in expressing tremendous gratitude to the Dane Hansen Foundation for their lead gift of $2M and to many other institutions and individuals who have so generously come forward.

Rempels balance life and work as newlyweds

Navigating through the first year of marriage can be tough, but Drs. Scott and Anna Rempel are successfully managing it—while working together as first-year residents at Smoky Hill Family Residency.

Scott and Anna, both graduates of the KU School of Medicine Class of 2016 (Scott, Salina; Anna, Wichita), met during their family medicine elective at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita, married last summer and started their residency shortly thereafter.

“We met on a rotation at Wesley. I showed up and there was one seat open, next to Anna. She offered to walk with me to the hospital and during the walk we learned we’d be on the same service,” Scott said. “I asked her out a few days later, and she said yes.”

During medical school, both had become close to Doug & Shelly Gruenbacher, physicians in Quinter, Kansas. The two quietly worked behind the scenes to get Scott and Anna together, and during their fourth year, it all came full-circle.
Message from the Dean

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to support the future of KU School of Medicine-Salina. Our thanks is also extended to the KU Endowment Association for establishing a fund that will generate nearly $50,000 per year to help cover future building needs, such as repairs and maintenance.

Demolition work on the bank building has begun and is scheduled to be completed by mid-January 2017. Reconstruction should start soon thereafter, and the building should be ready for occupancy in late spring 2018, in time for the start of academic year 2018-19. The project architects have been working closely with medical school faculty, staff and students to design a facility that will serve the needs of the medical school curriculum and be a functional, inviting and comfortable space for everyone working and studying there. Once completed, I am confident that we will have an extraordinary medical education building.

A new medical education building is not the only anticipated major change. The Class of 2021 (those beginning in 2017) will be introduced to a new curriculum. Over the course of the past two years, multiple KU School of Medicine faculty and staff members have been engaged in the process of transforming the medical education curriculum. The new education program has been affectionately termed the ACE curriculum. In contrast to the present curriculum, which is systems-based and lecture-heavy, the new curriculum will be more active (A), competency-based (C), and excellence-driven (E). Lectures will be reduced to no more than five hours per week. Students will engage in frequent case-based discussions in which they will participate in the discovery of core learning objectives, rather than sit through a lecture in which they are told what is important to know. Competency in clinical skills will be placed at a premium. Opportunities for early and significant clinical encounters will be increased. Change is always difficult, but I believe the changes will result in well-trained physicians.

During this time of year I am mindful of the many blessings our medical school campus has received. I am grateful to everyone who has made my job so rewarding and the countless others who have contributed in a variety of ways to the success of our campus in educating tomorrow’s doctors. I wish all of you a happy holiday season and a very prosperous New Year.

The Spotlight

Spotlight: Dr. Alisha Coulson

After obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Master’s Degree in Pathobiology, Dr. Alisha Coulson spent 10 more years working in a research laboratory before ultimately deciding to attend medical school - in the West Indies. Dr. Coulson sheds some light on her decision to specialize in psychiatry and the importance of working with medical students during their third year psychiatry rotation.

On her medical school experience:
I went to Ross University School of Medicine, located in Dominica, West Indies. Called the ‘Nature Island of the Caribbean,’ Dominica has beautiful sunsets, 12-hour days and nights, and not much development to distract from studying. I went through an earthquake and a hurricane and never had a greater appreciation for the U.S. as when I landed here after the hurricane experience.

How has medical school progressed? They seem to be continuing to emphasize the importance of problem-based learning; working together is vital. I read a great article in The Boston Globe that stated, ‘Teachers must use their time not to spout facts, but to prompt students to reason through problems and scenarios.’ This really resonated with me and I think it does with others as well.

Choosing psychiatry as a specialty:
While growing up, I had a dream of becoming a doctor. I grew up in Larned, Kansas, where there is a state hospital for psychiatry, and I worked there for a summer during college. As I went through my first two years of medical school, I continued to be focused on pathology, but my first rotation out of didactics was psychiatry and I loved it. I tried to keep an open mind through the rest of the rotations, but eventually, through an intuitive attraction to psychiatry and a slow process of elimination, I decided to specialize in psychiatry. It was more of a feeling of comfort with the decision than a real ‘Eureka’ moment.

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“Basically, Drs. Doug and Shelly tried to set us up before we met, then we just happened to be on the same elective rotation...almost like it was supposed to happen,” said Scott.

The two didn't grow up far from each other, but took very different undergraduate paths; Anna played softball as a biology major at Kansas Newman University in Wichita. Her first two years of medical school were spent in Kansas City, followed by years three and four on the Wichita campus. Scott traveled from Newton to St. Louis, where he majored in anthropology and public health at Washington University before becoming part of the second graduating class of the KU SOM.

Their journey into family medicine, however, started out very similarly. Both endured medical issues and numerous surgeries as children, giving them a special insight into the field of medicine.

“I knew I wanted to help others like I had been helped,” said Anna. “Initially, I wanted to go into pediatrics, but after going through my clinical rotations, I fell in love with family medicine.”

Scott’s mother was a skilled and caring nurse and he knew he wanted to uphold her legacy. After deciding on family medicine, the next step was choosing a residency that would fulfill all of their wishes to gain full-spectrum training and keep in line with their goals to become rural physicians. Smoky Hill Family Residency in Salina seemed like the natural choice, and the Rempels recognized that although there were many incredible programs they could be accepted into, they couldn't deny that Salina was ideal.

“Smoky Hill not only trains excellent family physicians, but does so with a rural family medicine emphasis, which was important to us,” said Anna. “It wasn't just the training, though, but the people and the overall culture of the program that ultimately helped us decide.”

Scott also felt very comfortable knowing he was heading into a residency program that he already felt a connection with.

“As a student on the Salina campus, we have the advantage of working alongside the residency. I think students learn better here as a result,” Scott said. “Because I was a student in Salina, the benefits are noticeable. I already know the hospital, many of the specialists, and services available to our patients. I can focus more on the medicine and disease management of patients than I would have otherwise.”

The Rempels, who plan to join the Gruenbachers’ rural practice in Quinter, intend to stay involved with the Salina campus as much as possible.

“We both love teaching, and I have a very special place in my heart for the Salina campus. I hope that Anna and I will help the program continue to grow and evolve.”

The Rempels continue to learn about medicine – and life – and juggling it all, but realize that it won’t always be easy. A supportive and understanding partnership is helpful, but knowing when to take a break can be even more important.

“Some days it feels like medicine never ends. Some of that is self-imposed, because we both want to be the best doctors we can be, and we're still trying to figure out how to say, 'Stop, we need to enjoy life,'” said Scott.

“We're still figuring it out, but we complement each other in our work styles and she knows what I'm going through and vice versa. It's simply awesome. I can't wait to see where life takes us – it's gonna be an adventure.”

In their free time, Scott and Anna love the outdoors and head to Colorado as often as possible.
Dr. Alisha Coulson  
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**Her journey to Salina:**
Multiple factors contributed to my decision to make Salina my home: A recruiting fair in Wichita (where I did my residency), my Kansas roots, my friend Dr. Amey-Perrin (who works for SRHC) and the stipend I received from Salina Regional Health Foundation to help during my final year of residency. With the partnership between the hospital and the school, becoming an assistant clerkship director seemed like a natural progression.

**What students can glean from the psychiatry clerkship:** I hope our students will consider a career in psychiatry. There is a severe shortage of psychiatrists, especially in western Kansas. Psychiatry is a specialty that should not be overlooked when considering residency.

**What Dr. Coulson has learned from her students:**
The best thing about working with students is how they inspire me to do a better job and I want to be an inspiration for them. I think patients benefit from having students present, because this inspires excellence in care and treatment. KU School of Medicine trains medical students in the best possible environment and I feel honored to help create that environment.