



# Focus

APRIL 2002

## Convocation 2002: The State of Downstate and the State of Global Public Health

In a "State of Downstate" address that was the highlight of this year's Convocation, President John LaRosa reported on major advances Downstate has made in fulfilling its education, research, and patient care missions.

The address was one of two given on April 8. Following Dr. LaRosa's address to the campus community in Alumni Auditorium, Laurie Garrett, the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, was speaker during a faculty awards dinner.

"In every area, we are becoming a strong institution," said Dr. LaRosa. "That doesn't mean that everything is perfect. We have problems just like every other academic medical center. But it does mean that we are aware of the challenges before us and capable of advancing our agenda during a difficult time for institutions like ours."

Reporting on developments in Downstate's four colleges, Dr. LaRosa noted the new curricula in the College of Medicine and the School of Graduate Studies. Both changes have won the support of students and faculty. With Polytechnic University, the School of Graduate Studies is now offering a master's program in biomedical engineering—the fastest growing engineering field—and plans to offer a Ph.D. program as well.

Dr. LaRosa also noted important developments in the curricula of the

College of Health Related Professions and the College of Nursing. In CHRP, departments are moving rapidly to offer graduate-level training. This reflects the increasing responsibility of physical and occupational therapists and other allied health professionals.

Most programs in the College of Nursing are already at the graduate level. Other than Columbia, Downstate is the only university in the state offering programs in all four major master's tracks: nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, nurse midwifery, and nurse anesthesia. Through a New York State grant, the College of Nursing will offer the opportunity to earn an advanced degree tuition-free to 13 RNs.

The president also reported that interest in the new Master's of Public

Health Program is high. We have received 120 applications—from as far away as California—for an expected class of 20 to 25 students who will enroll in June.

Researchers at Downstate continue to expand the horizons of medicine and science, according to Dr. LaRosa. In 2002, Downstate researchers are expected to receive \$45.9 million in funding—a 28 percent increase over three years ago. Nearly two-thirds of that funding goes to neuroscientists at Downstate. Other major areas of research include heart disease, the epidemiology of HIV, and molecular genetics. Dr. LaRosa said that he believes Downstate could do even better. Currently we rank 83rd out of 123 academic medical centers in NIH funding.

The formation of the Advanced Biotechnology Park will enable Downstate to not only change the face of medicine but lead economic development in Brooklyn. The president reported that Imclone, the park's first tenant, will open its new small molecule division in the park in May. By year's end, six new tenants, including three Downstate researchers, will join the park.

Dr. LaRosa also highlighted the progress University Hospital of Brooklyn has made during the past year in improving the quality of patient care and offering new services. With national attention focused on medical errors, he



Award-winning journalist Laurie Garrett reports on the state of global public health.

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## ALONG CLARKSON AVENUE

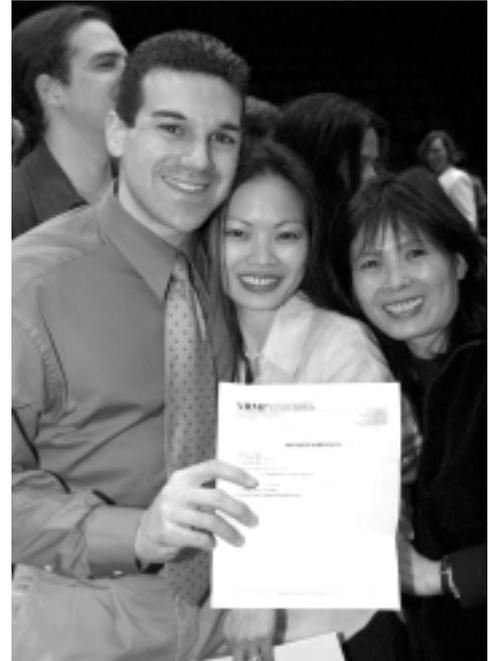
### CELEBRATING MATCH DAY

At the stroke of noon on March 21, graduating students who were gathered in Alumni Auditorium to learn where they will be doing their residency training next year received their match results. After a brief silence, when nothing could be heard but the sound of envelopes being ripped open, cheers broke out, followed by laughter and the heartfelt congratulations of family and friends.

While 25 percent of the class chose internal medicine, making it the top specialty of choice, 14 percent chose pediatrics. Emergency medicine and anesthesiology were also very popular. All told, 47 percent (including Ob/Gyn) went into primary care specialties.

Of the 183 graduating seniors who applied for residency programs, 127 are staying in New York State. The rest are going to Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, California, New Jersey, and Connecticut. "Continuing our long tradition, the majority of Downstate students will be doing their residency in New York City," Dean of Students Lorraine Terracina announced to loud applause. Sixty percent of our graduates are staying in the city; 17 students opted to stay in the metropolitan area (Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester); and one hardy soul is venturing to upstate New York.

The decision by so many of our graduates to stay in New York is good news, because it is often the case that doctors will practice in the region where they performed their residency. Downstate has the proud distinction of having trained more of New York's physicians than any other medical school in the country.



Adam Rotunda, who graduated from Downstate last year, is elated by the news that his wife, Thuy, will also be doing her residency in California.

### STUDENT WINS FELLOWSHIP FOR NEW AMERICANS

Second-year med student Sophia Jan is among the 30 students selected nationwide to receive a Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans. Open to immigrants and the children of immigrants, the award is one of the most sought-after grants for graduate study in the United States. In addition to a \$20,000 maintenance stipend, Ms. Jan will receive half-tuition for up to two years of study, which she plans to use to pursue a career in public health.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Ms. Jan comes from a family who emigrated from Taiwan. A graduate of Brooklyn College, she did volunteer work in Mexico as an advocate for people with special needs and helped establish a reading and art program for village children. She also interned with the NYC Department of Health as a public health researcher on the West Nile virus.

In her winning essay for the Soros fellowship, Ms. Jan attributes her interest in public health and the needs of special populations to her experiences abroad and at home, where she is caretaker for a brother who is severely disabled. She has applied these lessons at Downstate, where she is treasurer of the Medical Student Council and president of the campus chapter of the American Medical Student Association. As the newly elected chair of the association's National Advocacy Committee, Ms. Jan actively lobbies for universal health coverage and the health concerns of women and minorities.



Soros award winner Sophia Jan (back row) is joined by fellow Downstate students Paul Dama (to her left), David Nusz, David Galpern, and Thomas Wong (front row), and Chris Teng (standing) at the American Medical Student Association annual meeting.

## TRIPLE WINNER

For the third year in a row, Downstate has won the coveted Governor's SEFA Cup. Our campus succeeding in raising \$1436,755—more than any other city agency—for the State Employees Federated Appeal. This was a great achievement in view of the desire among many campus members to also contribute to World Trade Center relief efforts.

On March 14, we honored the following SEFA "Stars" for their outstanding contributions to the campaign. A special plaque bearing their names will be located in the glass case near Alumni Auditorium.

**Doris Connaghan**  
**Deborah Everett**  
**Eileen Hardy**  
**Adrienne Jackson**  
**Frances Poe**  
**Dawn Torres**

Last year's  
SEFA Stars:  
**Richard Katz**  
**Terry Kayda**  
**Donald Lemke**  
**Robin Meyers**

## ANNUAL RESEARCH DAY

This year, medical students and post-docs joined graduate students in the Annual Research Day poster competition sponsored by the School of Graduate Studies.

At this year's event, we were honored to have Dr. Brian Chait, Camille and Henry Dreyfus Professor at Rockefeller University, as keynote speaker. Dr. Chait, director of Rockefeller's Mass Spectrometric Biotechnology Research Resource, spoke on "Proteomic Tools for Dissecting Cellular Function."



Dr. Brian Chait, guest lecturer at this year's Annual Research Day, attends a student poster session.

## Coming Events

**May 8** Nurse Recognition Day. UHB's annual celebration honoring nurse caregivers will take place in the hospital cafeteria, starting at 3 p.m.

**May 11** UHB Health Fair. In celebration of National Hospital Week, enjoy healthful cooking demonstrations, music and clowns; receive free health screenings and lots of information. 10 a.m.–3 p.m., Lenox Road between E. 35–37 Streets. Rain date: May 18 in the Grove.

**May 15** Palliative Care Forum. This forum inaugurates a new effort to teach palliative care at Downstate. 7:30am-noon, Alumni Auditorium.

**May 16** Urban Cardiology Symposium. Sponsored by the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, the conference will explore "Current and Emerging Trends in the Management of Heart Failure"; 8:15 a.m.–3 p.m., Alumni Auditorium.



President John LaRosa, SEFA loaned executive Leslie Rogowsky, and executive campaign manager Virginia Whitaker (holding plaque) congratulate the SEFA "Stars" who helped make the campaign a success.

## UHB Sexual Healing

news & events

Judging by the name, you might think that an andrologist is a robot with a medical degree. Not so. Andrology is the medical specialty concerned with male sexual health. Dr. William Blank, who recently joined Downstate as clinical assistant professor of urology (and whose wife is a dialysis nurse at UHB), is an expert in treating male sexual problems, including infertility. He is among the handful of andrologists in this country who are two-year board certified in this area.

"It's a mistake to treat infertility only in woman," he says. He is also mindful that when a male patient comes to see him about a sexual complaint, such as erectile dysfunction, it may signal a hidden, potentially serious vascular condition. One of his major research interests is the link between impotence and heart disease.

To encourage greater dialog about sexual care, he recently organized a symposium on Sexuality and Medical Practice in Brooklyn. Sponsored by the Urology Department, it featured special guests Ruth Westheimer ("Dr. Ruth") and Andrew McCullough, M.D., director of Male Sexual Health and Fertility at NYU.



Well-known sexologist Dr. Ruth Westheimer (shown at left, in bottom row) was keynote speaker at a campus symposium on sexuality and medical practice. Other participants (to her right) are Drs. Richard Macchia, Steven Cohn, and Richard Sadovsky; and (l. to r., top row) Drs. William Blank, Marian Dunn, and Andrew McCullough.

## Excellence in Obstetrics

Downstate, along with two other medical centers in Brooklyn—Maimonides and Brooklyn Hospital Center—has been designated a regional perinatal centers by the N.Y.S. Department of Health. This distinction has been granted to only 17 hospitals statewide. Perinatology is the special care devoted to women with high-risk pregnancies. Our designation as a perinatal center reflects the quality of our comprehensive care and specialty services that are available here for mothers-to-be and their newborns.

## Convocation 2002 (continued)

expressed his hope that UHB could emerge as a leader in reducing such errors. The hospital has already developed a multifaceted approach to addressing the issue. A rebuilt Quality Assurance Program, practice guidelines and clinical pathways, a robotic pharmacy, and consultation with experts in quality improvement are among the initiatives the hospital has undertaken to strengthen care.

The hospital has already received validation of its efforts. After the recent site visit, the JCAHO gave the hospital a nearly perfect score. Hospital administrators are committed to maintaining a constant state of readiness for JCAHO and other organization reviews by conducting mock surveys on a quarterly basis.

Hospital administration and Downstate doctors have also taken major steps to rebuild the clinical enterprise, according to Dr. LaRosa. Nine new labor and delivery rooms are about to open, followed by a new stroke unit this summer. The capacity of the Emergency Room will soon double, and with its completion, Brooklyn's first spiral CT machine will come on line. The spiral CT, important in making rapid diagnoses of unstable patient, will be housed in a Digital Diagnostics Room adjacent to the ER.

Downstate will maintain its pioneering role in imaging technology, noted Dr. LaRosa, by becoming the first medical center in the United States to create an MRI operating room. The concept of surgeons operating within the magnetic field of an MRI machine that projects real-time images of the procedure is Dr. Ray Damadian's. Dr. Damadian developed MRI at Downstate and was the first to produce human images using the

technology in 1977. Construction of the MRI operating room will begin in 2003.

Dr. LaRosa concluded his address by noting that Downstate has a story to tell—a fact that will help us launch our first

significant fundraising effort. "You have helped Downstate take some incredible steps," he told the audience. "The many threads of Downstate's potential are coming together like they never have before." ■

## Convocation Dinner: Honoring the Faculty

Following his State of Downstate address, President LaRosa hosted a dinner for the faculty. The keynote speaker for the dinner was Laurie Garrett, a *Newsday* reporter who has won all of journalism's "Big Three" awards, the Pulitzer, the Polk, and the Peabody, for her reporting. She is the author of *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Disease in a World Out of Balance* and *Betrayal of Trust: The Collapse of Global Public Health*.

In an impassioned address, Ms. Garrett spoke of the threat that infectious diseases and bioterrorism pose and of the woefully inadequate response of governments around the world.

During the dinner, Dr. LaRosa honored three faculty members with a new award, the Presidential Medal for Excellence in Teaching, Research, or Community Service. The first recipients are:

Paul Harris, MD  
Presidential Medal for Excellence in Teaching

Dr. Harris established Downstate's first clerkship in ambulatory care. From the beginning it was one of the most popular learning experiences for students. Students, usually individually but sometimes in pairs, are assigned to a physician in private practice, HMO, a neighborhood health center, or a hospital clinic. Dr. Harris views the experience as an early apprenticeship with students providing hands-on care under the guidance of a caring physician.



Xian-Cheng Jiang, PhD  
Presidential Medal for Excellence in Research

Before coming to Downstate as a graduate student in 1985, Dr. Jiang had already won numerous awards in his home city of Shanghai. Today Dr. Jiang is an associate professor of anatomy and cell biology. His research focuses on the relationship between lipid metabolism and atherosclerosis. Using transgenic mice and gene knock-out technology, his research may one day help find new, therapeutic approaches to treat or prevent heart disease.



Mary Germain, EdD  
Presidential Medal for Community Service

Following the attack on the World Trade Center, Dr. Germain, a retired colonel in the Army Nurse Corp Reserves, was called to active duty. Until other medical help arrived, she and one other nurse practitioner cared for more than 600 National Guard troops mobilized for disaster relief. Active in many other projects, Dr. Germain has been named Distinguished Practitioner by the National Academy of Nursing Practice.



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Focus

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