Dear colleague,

The east side of the campus is buzzing (and it is not just the lawn mowers) as the second-year medical school class resumed its curriculum last week and the new Nursing, Pharmacy and Dental students also arrived.

The first UPI open house was Wednesday afternoon. There was good discussion and one of the participants suggested that the information might be too important to be optional. While we are not about to mandate attendance at these meetings, it is a good enough testimonial that it might induce those of you who have not yet planned on attending one of the next three meetings. Two of the UPI meetings will be held on Monday, Aug. 31, and Tuesday, Sept. 22, from 5-7 p.m. in Room 7000 (the board room) of Academic Office 1. The third UPI meeting will be held at The Children’s Hospital at a time and place to be determined. I’ll try to let you know in a future issue of What’s Going On Here.

On Saturday, the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Gen. Eric Shinseki, visited the Anschutz Medical Campus to celebrate the fact that the VA will soon build a hospital and office facilities on the east side of the campus. This will bring another of our affiliated hospitals to AMC. That is terrific.

The CU Foundation presented investment results to the Executive Committee last week. The foundation manages about $825 million in assets. Because of the recession, the investment performance on those assets was down nearly 18 percent for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2009. This compared to stock and other financial indexes that dropped more than 22 percent for the same period. Foundation officials expect the economy to bottom out by year’s end. But they believe the recovery from that low-point will be “sluggish” because as residential home prices stabilize, commercial real estate loans are starting to go bad. On the bright side, the foundation reports that the university system’s number of “underwater” endowments (those whose current market values is less than the historical gift value) is half of what it was in February because of better market performance. Also, our investment advisors outperformed Harvard’s by a long shot. The recession shaved roughly 30 percent off the value of Harvard’s endowment. On the other hand, the University of Colorado system’s collective $825 million endowment barely accounts for a single year’s interest on Harvard’s badly battered endowment, which has shrunk to a paltry $25 billion (with a B).

In related news, a Wall Street firm has hired away CU investment manager Chris Bittman because he managed the school’s portfolio so well. He will continue to manage the entire CU portfolio in his new job and also manage a fund for his new employer.
The Department of Pharmacology’s Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) for underrepresented populations recently completed this year’s program. This 10-week program introduces five undergraduate students from diverse, disadvantaged, and traditionally underrepresented groups to graduate/research career opportunities. It is one of several important pipeline programs we have developed to help recruit a more diverse and inclusive student body. This year’s students were from Metropolitan State College, University of Colorado Denver, University of Colorado Boulder, and Humboldt State University in California. This group was particularly enthusiastic about conducting their own mentored research projects, presenting their results, and asking questions at a seminar series conducted by postdoctoral fellows. The co-directors of the program are Nancy R. Zahniser, PhD, Associate Dean and Professor of Pharmacology, and James M. Sikela, PhD, Professor of Pharmacology. The American Society for Pharmacology & Experimental Therapeutics, the Department of Pharmacology, and the Institute for Behavioral Genetics at the University of Colorado Boulder support the program. For more information, go to http://pharmacology.ucdenver.edu/summerprog.

Congratulations to Malik Kahook, MD, Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology on his selection as a consultant to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Augusto Miravalle, MD, Assistant Professor of Neurology, has joined the Rocky Mountain MS Center. He comes from Harvard University, where he spent the last year as a Multiple Sclerosis and neuroimmunology fellow. He was born and raised in Argentina and is fluent in both English and Spanish. Bienvenido a nuestra escuela Augusto.

Jerry Lefkowitz, MD, who was formerly on our Pathology faculty and who left at the end of 2007 to join the faculty of Cornell-Weill in New York as a Professor, died last week. Jerry’s family buried him in Pennsylvania on Friday. Our thoughts go out to his family and friends.

Norio Fukami, MD, Assistant Professor of Gastroenterology, recently received a rave review from state Sen. Rollie Heath in a news release. Norio, one of a handful of physicians in the country who perform outpatient surgery to remove esophageal tumors, performed the procedure on Sen. Heath to remove his cancer. The senator was so impressed he issued a news release singing Norio’s praises and those of the staff at University of Colorado Hospital (note that we are not violating HIPPA by discussing this). We have hundreds of talented faculty practicing state-of-the-art medicine at our affiliated hospitals. They work as hard on indigent patients as they do on the community’s powerbrokers, as I’m sure Norio does. Our faculty members don’t always get the recognition they deserve. So let me take this opportunity to thank every medical school faculty member for their hard work and expertise.

Several of our faculty members have received state grants funded under a 2008 legislative initiative to increase the commercial potential of bioscience technologies from Colorado research institutions. I have attached the announcement to this email.
And finally, not too many of you have applied for the CCTSI grant award program. The deadline is Sept. The relevant information is attached to this newsletter.

Have a great week.

With warm regards,

Richard D. Krugman, MD
Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs and
Dean, School of Medicine

"What’s Going On Here" is an email news bulletin from Richard Krugman, MD, Dean of the CU School of Medicine, that is distributed to inform University of Colorado School of Medicine faculty members about issues pertaining to the School’s mission of education, research, clinical care and community service. If you would like to receive these emails directly, please contact Jim.Spencer@ucdenver.edu.