



Ectopic Murmurs

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY
DR. NICANOR REYES SCHOOL OF MEDICINE ALUMNI FOUNDATION

February 2005

Volume 17 / Issue 1

Chairman's Message Rolando Casis, M.D.

I am happy to tell you that our foundation is financially healthy. This is not to mean that we should stagnate where we are. On the contrary, we should keep on persevering to increase our endowments so we can continue our projects and create or support other venues to improve our medical schools' ability to educate and train physicians.



To accomplish our objectives, we have to continue to attend our reunions and register at our CME. We need to make money during our conventions, and at the end of the year, start including the FEUDNRSMAF in our list for charitable giving. Please give the idea some thought and generosity.

The need to increase our support for the medical school is highlighted by the sad state of medical education in the Philippines (see article on page 7). We need to attract and retain the best teachers and the best students. We need to provide the school with the best tools and facilities for educating doctors.

(Continued on page 7)

Message from the President Arsenio Martin, M.D.

I would like to start by expressing my endless gratitude to my fellow alumni and especially to the members of the Board of the FEU DNRSMAF Alumni Foundation for electing me as their President in Troy, Michigan earlier in July. I am deeply honored with their selection and hope to accomplish many great things as President of the Board.

In Michigan, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of our first reunion. After these many years I feel we are ready for a "new look." We have started by the new design of our newsletter Ectopic Murmur. Also, thanks to Dr. Philip Chua, we have a new look for our website. Most notable of the additions are direct links to various medical resources like the NIH and WebMD.

The "new look" of our alumni foundation will not stop at our publications but will also be exhibited in our actions as an organization. My immediate goals for the next couple of years during my Presidency are as follows: To increase the participation of our Fellow alumni in our Organization.

- To work with the Bylaws committee to approve meetings by means of teleconference allowing us to achieve more of our goals.
- To explore other means of increasing our

(Continued on page 2)

Dr. J. B. Nolasco's Legacy Lives On

Doctor Jesus B. Nolasco, the first secretary of the Institute of Medicine of the Far Eastern University, first chairman of the Department of Physiology, teacher and advisor to all who were tutored by him, co-founder, officer and emeritus trustee of our Alumni Foundation, passed away on Wednesday, August 25, 2004 after a lingering illness.



Dr. Rolando Casis, chairman, FEUDNRSMAF, was privileged to be able to attend the wake for Dr. Nolasco in Jacksonville, Florida and convey to Mrs. Ester Nolasco and family, the deep sense of loss we, the officers and members of our alumni foundation feel with his passing.

Before he immigrated to the United States, he held his posts at our medical school from the founding and start of the first year class in 1952 for over ten years. He was a member of the elite class of 1940 of the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, many of whom were involved in the formation of the major departments of the medical school including Drs. Ricardo Alfonso, Gloria Aragon, Ricardo de Guzman, Deogracias Rodil, Florante Bocobo and five others.

As secretary of the Institute of Medicine, he had contact with every student and knew nearly everybody by name and face. He was well liked and respected for his soft spoken, reasoned and fair administrative style. Not to mention his quick wit and sense of humor.

As good an administrator as he was, I think he liked teaching physiology the most. He was

(Continued on page 2)

Silver Jubilarians Class 1970 Honored Edgardo Altares, M.D.

The Silver Jubilarian Class of '79 led the honorees at the 25th Far Eastern University Dr. Nicanor Reyes School of Medicine Alumni Foundation Annual Reunion and Scientific Convention. The event was held on July 14-18, 2004 at the Marriott Hotel, in Troy, Michigan.

From its aptly-themed Motown Night Welcome Reception to its festive Filipinana Night and to its elegant Annual Grand Reunion Dinner, the event was a perfect showcase of hard work, skills and dedication working together to create a masterpiece.

The 25th Annual Grand Reunion Dinner held on the 3rd night of three successive nights of fun, fellowship, and partying, was indeed an affair to remember. The evening belonged to the Silver Jubilarians, as they were presented before the audience, the way they were in medical school on a Powerpoint display and the way they are,

(Continued on page 3)

Notes on 25th Annual Reunion (Troy Marriott) July 14-18, 2004 Hernani Tansuche, Class 1968

We started planning for the reunion as early as 2002 by looking at possible hotel venues. Initially, we were told by the Board that we would be hosting the reunion in 2002. However, as it turned out, we deferred to the requests of Arsenio Martin '67, to host his class coral celebration in San Francisco and from our Foundation President, Amante Legaspi '68, to hold the 24th reunion at Virginia Beach.

I selected two experienced couples as my co-chairpersons: Renato and Daisy Ramos class of '62, and Deo and Clare Pascual, class of '71.

(Continued on page 6)

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all the previous deans of the medical school.

I am also hoping that some of you will join our editorial staff as recruits or volunteers.

One of the things I would like to see is more inventive, innovative ideas and actionable recommendations from all our alumni that can improve the quality and outcome of all we do to make our alma mater a better medical school. After all, that is what our Alumni Foundation is all about.

Let the *Ectopic Murmurs* be the springboard for your ideas.

Dr. JB Nolasco's Legacy Lives On

(Continued from page 1)

excellent; relaxed but stimulating, pedantic but not boring. It was during those years in medical school that Dr. Nolasco earned the respect and affection of his students. During his tenure, he was probably the most respected and loved faculty member.

In the United States, whenever "JB" attended alumni events, he was always the center of his former students' attention. We were fortunate that last year we were able to see him for the last time when he gave the Dr. Nicanor Reyes Jr. Memorial Lecture during our Annual Reunion and Scientific Convention in Norfolk, Virginia.

This first issue of the newly redesigned *Ectopic Murmurs* is dedicated to Dr. JB Nolasco, the *Ectopic Murmurs'* founding editor, who single-handedly published this newsletter from 1965 until December 1985.

The *Ectopic Murmurs* served as the catalyst that reconnected our alumni from all over the United States together and awakened alumni loyalty and involvement. "JB" as he was called by those who knew him well, and referred to affectionately by students, also helped found our Alumni Foundation and spearheaded many of the projects that had benefited the medical school, the faculty and the students for many years to come.

In recognition of his contributions, the Alumni Foundation funded and named an outstanding faculty award, the "J.B. Nolasco Award for Clinical Faculty" in the Institute of Medicine and when he finally stepped down from our Board of trustees, he was voted Honorary Trustee. These are but small accolades for a truly great man.

For all Dr. Nolasco has done for our Alumni Foundation and our medical school, and for the gift of the *Ectopic Murmurs*, I speak for all alumni and your colleagues in medicine. Dr. Nolasco, we thank you. We love you.

May you rest in eternal peace.

Renato G. Ramos, MD

Message from the President

(Continued from page 1)

income or revenue.

- To continue participation with the Annual Homecoming convention at our Alma Mater in the Philippines.

To enhance the performance of the medical students in the Philippines by becoming more involved with their introduction to medicine. I also welcome an open dialogue to any alumni and their family who feel like there are other issues that we should address.

Please feel free to call or e-mail me with any concerns about the Foundation. Phone Numbers are (409) 985-3207 / (409) 724-1550. My e-mail address is: ArsMartin@aol.com.

Finally, I would like to include my heartfelt condolences on behalf of our family regarding the death of Dr. Jesus B. Nolasco. He was one of the pillars and founders of our medical school and our Alumni Foundation. We will miss his tremendous ingenuity and his priceless guidance.

Reflections of the Pearl Jubilarians Guat Sy, M.D.

The 25th Annual Reunion and Scientific Convention at The Marriott Hotel in Troy, Michigan started with the Wednesday night Welcome reception at a local church hall, hosted by the local chapter. The following evening, when no formal event was scheduled, Guat 'Jun' Sy's Class 1974 and Dion Sy's Class 1975 and their families gathered at the Sy residence for a dinner get-together, reminiscing, singing, and lots of laughter. Among the Pearl Jubilarians present were Tessie Lorenzo Noveras, Ligaya Marasigan Labao, Azucena Montenegro Fabi, Vickie Ramos Oira, Mildred Rey Monroy, Vickie Snachez Bal, and Lynne Seli Lopez; Letty Ang came from the Philippines, arriving with Ligaya. Other out of state alumni friends from California and New Jersey also enjoyed the festivities. The night was made more special by the presence of Dr. Delfin Tan, who was hijacked by Jun while he was waiting for a ride to Renato and Daisy Ramos's home for the reception for the Board and guests; Dr. Tan was one of the clinical professors of the class and was coincidentally here to talk on Endometriosis earlier in the day. That Thursday night, Dr. Tan was accompanied by Ernie dela Cerna, the President of the FEU Medical Alumni Society, and the latter's wife. A dance, Spaghetti, was practiced for a short time and presented during the Friday Filipiniana Night honoring Class '74, Class '84, Class '89, and Class '94. Bert Portugal surprised everyone when he appeared for a short while that night accompanied by his brother, Francisco, Class 1975, who arrived from Canada; at that time, Bert was coincidentally visiting his sister, who lives in Michigan. Ligaya spoke on Alternative Management of Menopause and Jun, the Michigan Chapter's immediate past president, on Anorectal Disorders Update 2004. Minerva "Gigi" Faustino Etcubanez came over to chat with the group during the Saturday Grand Ball as she accompanied and sat with her husband, Edwin, Class 1973.

Editor's Memo

The publication of the first issue of the redesigned *Ectopic Murmurs* was accomplished with considerable inertia. Hopefully, future issues will be more timely and published more regularly.

First, I want to thank Dr. Philip Chua for commissioning the design of the new masthead. It is well done, colorful and classy. Secondly, I want to thank the contributors for their articles. It is absolutely essential to the continuation of this newsletter that there be a continuous flow of publishable materials from our officers, members and chapters. Therefore, I request all the chapter presidents to prepare capsulated nuggets about their respective chapter activities and worthwhile items about their members for each subsequent issue.

The alumni are always eager to hear about our medical school; therefore, I have requested a regular column by the dean, which will be one of our new features. I am sure our new dean, Dr. Remedios Habacon, will maintain the traditions and wonderful working relationship we had with

Silver Jubilarian Class of 1979

(Continued from page 1)

live and in person 25 years after graduation. A silver medallion was awarded to each of the honorees commemorating the 25 years since graduation. This was followed by the touching candle-light ceremony which undoubtedly evoked a sense of nostalgia to the honorees leaving them with a genuine appreciation of the Alma Mater that laid the foundation for a successful career in the medical profession. The group brought the house down with their masterful interpretation of line dancing to the tune of *She Bang, She Bang* of William Hung fame, choreographed by L.A. based Malou Gegare-Cruz.

Class of '79 members who attended included: Marilou Gegare-Cruz of Los Angeles, CA; Geny Brabante-Burgos of Stockton, CA; Helen Novesteras-Nool of Tracy, CA; Roberto Concepcion of Marion, OH; Evelyn Sudaria-Altares of Bloomfield Hills, MI. Yours truly completed the cast.

The few days the Class of '79 spent together were indeed precious and strengthened the bonds of friendship born out of challenges overcome and the triumphs attained while in medical school. As the saying goes, we don't remember days, nor months, nor years. We remember moments. The 25th Annual Reunion certainly provided memorable moments that will surely find its way to our treasure chest of golden memories. For these we thank Drs. Renato and Daisy Ramos, Dr. and Mrs. Hernani Tansuche, Drs. Deo and Clair Pascual, and to all who made it more meaningful, memorable, and most enjoyable.

PMAC Medical Mission Edgar A. Borda, M.D.

Each year, since 1986, the Philippine Medical Association in Chicago (PMAC), held medical missions at different locations in the Philippines. This endeavor was started by its energetic-1986 president: Dr. Rolando Casis, an anesthesiologist. For that long period of time, Dr. Casis chaired the Medical/Surgical Missions every year. Each year, since 1986, the Philippine Medical Association in Chicago (PMAC), held medical missions at different locations in the Philippines. This endeavor was started by its energetic-1986 president: Dr. Rolando Casis, an anesthesiologist. For that long period of time, Dr. Casis chaired the Medical/Surgical Missions every year including the January 12-15, 2004, medical mission in the Island of Sibuyan, Romblon, Philippines.

The choice of the site was the brain-child of the 2003-2004 PMAC president, Dr. Edgar A. Borda who took almost two years to get the agreement and arrangements of a mission free of board and lodging, meals and transportation back and forth.

The missionaries boarded the "Blessed Mother" luxury boat, at Manila's Pier 5, on Janu-

ary 10, 2004 (Sat. 5:00 pm), taking most of the cabins of the boat. By 8:30 pm, we were ushered to the VIP room for dinner and drinks which were all "free." After the dinner, many took turns to sing with the karaoke and the first brave soul to do so was Dr. Luis Mangubat, the surgeon. Believe me, the tenor of his voice made Dr. Anita Avila, the pediatrician, laugh with gusto.

Most of went to bed at about midnight. By 5:30 am, we were awakened by the thunderous drums beating in unison with the voices of the "Tribu de Pili" dance troupe members at the Sibuyan pier. We did not expect this kind of a welcome. In many years of doing medical missions, I have not encountered such a wonderful and colorful reception. We were received by the townspeople and the public officials which included: the Cajidiocan Mayor: Mr. Nick Ramos; the San Fernando Mayor: Dr. Nannette B. Tansingco and the representative of the Magdiwang Mayor Jolly Monton. The Governor (Mr. Eleandro F. Madrona) came the following day.

We were gathered at the Cajidiocan Plaza Auditorium where they held some presentations and program with breakfast for us. Then at noontime, we were brought to the Cantingas River Resort for a sumptuous lunch. Some of us went swimming, including the celebrated "jump" made by Dr. Emma Salazar, the anesthesiologist, and Jennifer Kane, the nurse from Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. Later on, I assigned the group to their respective host, some well-to-do-residents of the area.

The first day of work started at 8:00 am, January 12, 2004. The surgical, OB-GYN and the Ophthalmology groups started doing their surgeries as the patients were already screened and cleared the day prior. The OPD was stationed at the Town Plaza Auditorium. We were overwhelmed by the number of people that came. As an Internist, I did see patients needing surgical procedures and cleared them for surgery.

On the start of the second day, the Hospital Director, Dr. Villanueva, told me that we could no longer schedule any more surgeries as all the 4 days has been filled up during the first day of the mission. I was stunned for a brief moment and did not know what to do with the patients seated in-line just in front of me, waiting to be seen. I took a deep breath, cleared my thoughts and then announced to the crowd, with a heavy heart, that we could no longer consult or schedule surgeries because the scheduled four days had been fully booked! My heart was crushed to see the people leaving the place, slowly but quietly and without complaint. I know they were hoping, as they had all been waiting for us since I came a year earlier to announce and arrange this medical/surgical

mission. And I had to drive them away now! If only we had one more surgeon and another anesthesia machine that worked, I am pretty sure we could have taken care of all of them.

As the 3rd and 4th day went by, I was busy but downhearted, thinking about these people who came from a distant place, and we have failed to accommodate and help those who needed the most help. There was nothing I could do at this point in time. Happy that we came and helped some, but not all.

In spite of being short in manpower and supplies, we were able to see a total of 2,281 patients in 4 days. This includes 51 major and 54 minor surgeries. We did the following: Thyroidectomies, herniorrhaphies, cleft-lip surgeries for children, bilateral hydroceles, cataract surgeries with lens implants, tubal ligations, testicular tumors, pterygiums, skin tags, foreign bodies, lumps and bumps surgeries. We also distributed used graded glasses, clothes and shoes, and toys for the children.

I cannot describe the beautiful smiles, the reactions and gratitudes of the children, the poor parents, as recipients of the above gifts and procedures. Most of these people have not seen a doctor in their life. Of course, what would be the point of seeing a doctor if you cannot afford to buy the prescribed medications! "They just lie there, and they die there," as one famous song would say.

As part of the PMAC tradition, on the last day of the mission, we held a "thank you" party for all, at the expense of the PMAC. We had good food and beautiful music to dance with all night. Everybody was happy and enjoyed the evening spree.

The following day, Saturday, the yacht of Governor Madrona came to pick up to go to Boracay Beach, as I promised. We dined together in the evening and had some fun. We stayed at the hotel owned and operated by Drs. Jane and Amante Legaspi, who gave us a "good deal."

The following were the missionaries: Dr. Menelo Avila, Dr. Anita Avila, Dr. Teresita Avila-Barona, Dr. Eugene Salazar, Dr. Emma Salazar, Dr. Luis Mangubat, Faye Mendiola, Corazon Guzon, Edna Hauptman, Marcy Matousek, Bernardita Libot, Jennifer Kane, Dr. Rodrigo Farrales, Dr. Eloisa Dizon, Dr. Dianella Dizon, Dr. Rutheva Dizon-Moore, Dr. Divina Rosal, Dr. Ricardo Gonzales, Lolita Gonzales, Sarah Borda, Dr. Ma. Luisa Sumabat, Dr. Washington Sumabat, Ma. Teresa Cunada, Teofilo Borda, Romel Borda, Dr. Mayet Manabat, Dr. Vic Alarva, Elmore Borda, Tristan Sumabat, Dr. Dennis Sunio, Dr. Rolando Casis and Dr. Edgar Borda.



The 25th Annual Reunion



Chairman, Philip and Farida Chua



President, Amante and Jane Legaspi



Foundation Officers being inducted



Ed Relucio receiving outstanding alumnus award



Silver Jubilarian class 1979



Ageless alumni beauties



Class 1964 performs . . .



. . . in prime time

and Scientific Seminar in Pictures



Incoming President, Arsenio and Fe Martin



Convention Chairman Nani and Myrna Tansuche



CME Program in session . . .



... deserves rapt attention



FEUMAS president, Ernie dela Cerna and friends



It's showtime folks!!!



Pearl Jubilarian Class 1974



One moment in time

Notes on 25th Annual Reunion

(Continued from page 1)

The Ramoses are savvy veterans in planning national and local conventions dating back to their APPA affiliation. The Pascuals are well known in our local circles for being hard workers and experienced in hosting social events. I was also fortunate to have a core of active members willing to work at whatever committee assignments were given to them.

We had spirited discussions at our various planning meetings, such as the type of food to serve, especially during the welcome reception, quantity (how many lechons to order), etc. We also discussed how to enforce the no-ticket, no-admission policy for the welcome reception.

From my perspective as chairperson of the 25th Annual reunion, here is a daily chronicle of events:

July 13th (Tuesday): I checked in at the Troy Marriott in the early evening with my wife Myrna and son Chris, bringing a car full of convention paraphernalia (name tags, tickets, folders, posters, etc). That evening, we helped the registration committee, headed by Romy '60 and Pining Tabbilos and co-chair Sid Almada '62 sort out the registration materials by stuffing the envelopes with pre-paid tickets for the different social events as well as other miscellaneous registration materials. There were discussions again on how to implement the process of registering. I stayed up past midnight going over last-minute details and feeling apprehensive that D-day was finally just a few hours away.

July 14th (Wednesday): On-site registration started at 1:00 pm. I went over details with Kurt Boerner, the hotel director of event planning. All of the reserved block of 150 rooms were booked including 5 complimentary rooms. I was about to order lunch at Shula's restaurant with my family when I suddenly remembered I had a meeting with hotel personnel. Before the meeting started, my cell phone rang and it was Tessie Son, wife of Rody Son '60 (chapter treasurer) telling me there were problems at the airport picking up out-of-town guests. Recruited my son and after several phone calls were made the problem was solved. Meanwhile, the registration desk was busy as more alumni members arrived to pick up their pre-registered packets or to register on-site.

The welcome reception was held off-site, with several buses hired for the 10-minute ride from the hotel (I got chided by fellow members for forgetting to bring my own admission ticket). "Motown Night" was the theme for the reception, with miniature car models on each table, symbolic of the Big Three automakers in Detroit, and 45 rpm vinyl records taped to the wall. The menu for the night featured Filipino cuisine. (Ching Ancog '57 was in charge of the reception). I went home exhausted, but content that no major hitches occurred during the first day.

July 15th (Thursday): I got up at 6:00 am to check on the transport buses for golfers. This was the first day of CME sessions and drug exhibits. The list of exhibitors included 13 pharmaceutical firms, 5 jewelers and 1 real estate company from Florida.

I skipped lunch with my class ('68) to catch a nap in my room and prepare for the Board of Trustees meeting that afternoon. The Board elected Rolly Casis '65, as incoming chairman and Sen Martin '67, as President. Other officers and board trustees were also elected.

The meeting ended around 5:00 pm and I got ready for a party at the elegant house of the Ramoses. The hotel lobby was filled with FEU alumni going to their respective class and private parties. Sumptuous dinner that night was jointly hosted by the Ramoses and the Tansuches. There was a good turnout of the classes of '62, '63, '68 and '69 as well as other FEU friends. Some of the golfers in the party had nothing but praise for the course they played that morning. (Tony deLeon '81 was in charge of golf). Before retiring, I had to make phone calls to several golfers in the hotel for a change in schedule.

July 16th (Friday): Benita Blanco '63, was kind enough to offer her help in doing the table arrangements for Filipiniana Night. Making sure that all class members were seated together or at adjacent tables was a time-consuming task, and I missed my class of '68 business luncheon meeting. The decorators were busy preparing the ballroom. A replica of a native "bahay kubo" was placed at the entrance.

The ballroom had a Filipino festive motif with birds of paradise and red aurantium flowers. Each table had flowers placed in a bamboo vase and a small bilao filled with Filipino pastries. The bilao and the bamboo were ordered from the Philippines. Some of the alumni were so impressed by the arrangements that they requested to take them home. I had some minor acid-reflux moments when some alumni members questioned the seating arrangements. The policy, as we explained, was that those seated in front would be in the back the following night for parity reasons. The program included a musical tribute by the class of '69 to one of their classmates, Gene Gonzales-Guinto, who attended with her husband, Ed, despite being ill (She passed away December 1st). Pearl Jubilarians (Class '74) headed by our own Guat Sy, Jr. had a presentation. Emcee of the night was Efrén Platon '66.

July 17th (Saturday): The last day of CME was highlighted by the popular CPC and the annual Dr. Nicanor Reyes, Jr. Memorial lecturer.

during the Annual General Membership Luncheon. Dr. Ernie dela Cerna, current president of the alumni in the Philippines, represented the locals in the absence of Mrs. Josephine Reyes, Board Chairwoman, and Dean Flor-deliza Baltazar.

Immediately after lunch I went to work with Nita Blanco on the seating arrangements for the Grand Ball. After finishing at 3:30 pm, I went to my hotel room and set up a large poster plan for the table arrangements plus a list of alumni members for each table for easy reference.

Dressed in my tuxedo, I came down to the lobby of the Grand Ballroom at around 6:15 pm, where alumni members were already gathering in the lobby. I was pleasantly surprised upon entering the closed ballroom to find it decorated with a profusion of orchids and roses, white covered seats and the like. With help from the host

chapter members, we placed table numbers on each table. A large crowd was waiting to come in but we held them off till everything was in order and finally opened the doors at around 6:50 pm.

program was highlighted by the Silver Jubilee presentation headed by our own Edgar & Evelyn Altares, '79. The guests had filet mignon and lobster for dinner (we had sampled all the menu several weeks earlier). Dance music was provided by the Kayumanggi band. Master of ceremonies were Chit Riparip '66 and Dave Villanueva '72. We said goodbye to friends and alumni who had to leave early the following morning.

June 18 (Sunday): I was up early with Father Boie Agustin, who came all the way from Reno, Nevada to officiate at Mass. The good Father was such a hit with the Sunday crowd with his funny anecdotes during homily that he was invited by Ray and Evelyn Sandoval, '60 for next year's reunion in Las Vegas. The choir was accompanied by organ and violin, the latter played by Dr. Desi Segundo.

It was finally over! Hosting the reunion was a group effort by the entire Michigan chapter. Space constraints prevent me from mentioning and thanking all the individuals involved although I have mentioned some of them in this article. They know who they are and I am grateful for all their involvement and hard work.

Now, where did I leave that paperwork to complete my accounting for the reunion? It should be in one of these boxes

Dr. Relucio Honored as Outstanding Alumnus

Doctor Edmundo Relucio was honored as the most outstanding alumnus by our foundation during the annual jubilarian night dinner dance on July 17, 2004 in Troy, Michigan. The dinner dance was the highlight of the 25th Annual Reunion and Scientific Convention held July 14-18 at the Troy Marriott in suburban Detroit.

The award is the culmination of a very long and dedicated service to the Alumni Foundation in various capacities from trustee to vice president to president and finally chairman.

Doctor Relucio is a member of the elite class of 1964. He recently retired from a busy practice of general surgery in Coal City, Illinois.

Milestones

Please let us know of important news about yourselves and fellow alumni such as relocation, retirement, signal honors, death, etc.

CRISIS IN PHILIPPINE MEDICAL EDUCATION

Renato G. Ramos, M.D.

In the last few years, the passing rate in the annual medical licensure examinations has gradually and significantly fallen from 64.3% in August 2001 to 55.6% in August 2003, 51.9% in February 2004 and 51.04% in August 2004.

A multitude of factors are blamed for the decline, including the proliferation of medical schools to the current number of 36, twelve of which are in metro Manila. Many of the medical schools have substandard facilities and nearly half apparently do not even have their own teaching hospitals as required.

As a consequence of more medical schools, the number of qualified teachers and faculty have been diluted and in short supply. Similarly, in order to fill those medical school classes, the admission criteria are relaxed and the quality of the medical students accepted, lowered.

The problem is compounded by the shift in career choices from medicine to nursing and other paramedical fields in the last few years. The result is that there has been a 23% decline in NMAT applications in the year 2000 and an 18% to 74% decline in medical school enrollments in the various medical schools. The dearth of medical school applications and enrollment has led to the closing of the Manilla Central University College of Medicine and the pending closure of two others.

Not only has there been a shift in career choices to nursing and other paramedical fields. A large number of physicians have gone back to nursing schools in order to take advantage of more liberal employment and immigration opportunities for nurses overseas. It is estimated that upwards of 10,000 doctors have taken up or are taking nursing degrees. A crisis in healthcare is bound to follow.

A root cause of the crisis in Philippine medical education is the failure of regulatory agencies to do their jobs; quality of medical education and healthcare should never be compromised for quantity.

Institute of Medicine Addresses Crisis in Medical Education

Renato G. Ramos, M.D.

On January 20, 2005, a strategic session was held at the medical school to address the crisis in medical education in the Philippines as it impacts the Institute of Medicine.

The session was chaired by Dr. Daniel Fabito and was held in conjunction with the 2005 annual homecoming. Those who attended the meeting include Dean Remedios Habacon, Hospital Director, Rey de Vega, Chief of Clinics Deane Campo-Cruz, some heads of departments and faculty members. Officers of the FEU Alumni Medical Society, headed by Dr. Ernie dela Cerna were also in attendance. Officers and

members of the FEUDNRSMAF who participated include Drs. Edmundo Relucio, Philip Chua, Amante Legaspi, Arsenio Martin, Rolando Casis and Renato Ramos.

The issues addressed, included ways of attracting the best and the brightest first year medical students with entrance scholarships. Five entrance scholarships have been approved by the Executive Committee of the Alumni Foundation and another four-year scholarship has been funded by Dr. Relucio. The scholars have been selected this year and were presented during the student achievement award program. The plan is to continue the scholarships yearly so that in four years, we may be supporting as many as 20 medical students. The medical school will publicize the availability of these scholarships and try to widen the territory from which they get their medical school applicants.

The quality of instruction and the quality of the faculty were discussed. The feeling of the faculty is that there has been no deterioration in these areas. They do feel that they need flexibility in attending instructional courses and seminars without the negative encumbrances that sometimes dissuade them from going. Many suggested that the faculty fellowships which were funded or partially subsidized by our Alumni Foundation which enabled deserving faculty members to spend a few months in a medical school abroad for further training in medical school education techniques be revived.

Some of the faculty took issue with some of the medical board examination questions coming from some members of the Board of Examiners, however, the Dean said that their association is addressing this issue.

Many believe that the main reason for the declining passing rate of medical school graduates in the Board examination is the lower academic skills of medical students and the lower standards of many medical schools in terms of students, faculty and facilities.

For the Institute of Medicine, our facilities and teaching aids have actually markedly improved with the move to Fairview and the continued support from our Alumni Foundation. Our core faculty has remained largely intact and capable. The real challenge for them is to educate, to stimulate, and to inspire the students we have, in order for them to perform, to achieve, and to succeed in schools, in the Boards, in their profession and in life.

FEU-DNRSMAF Teleconference

*Janet P. Legaspi, M.D.
Executive Director*

Medical School Ad Hoc Committee

November 4, 2004

Participants: Rolando Casis, M.D., Chairman; Arsenio Martin, M.D., President; Daniel Fabito, M.D.; Philip Chua, M.D.; Edmundo Relucio, M.D.; Emilie Ongcapin, M.D.; Cesar Lastimoso, M.D.; Jane Legaspi, M.D.

There is a general consensus of concerns

regarding the poor performance of our medical students as evidenced by the poor medical examinations showing recently. Hence the chairman and the president decided to form an ad hoc committee co chaired by Drs. Martin and Casis to help remedy the situation. There was a long discussion, input, recommendations and solutions as stated below.

Dr. Baltazar has indicated to Dr. Martin during their phone conversation prior to the teleconference that the quality of medical students we now have are far less superior than those of previous years. Several suggestions were made like recruiting excellent students from other medical preparatory schools and not just limit the admission from FEU. There were also suggestions of offering full scholarship funds to five deserving students for their whole five years in medical schools. Calculations were made and based on a five-year term, the whole amount for five students (a total of 20 when all years are occupied) will run up to approximately \$47,560.00 per year. Dr. Ed Relucio volunteered to fund one deserving student for the whole five years, the total amount is considered a big chunk coming from the Foundation fund, hence this matter will still be followed up in the next teleconference in mid-December, and then will be discussed extensively in the next winter BOT meeting. The committee approved to send a check to Dr. Martin in his dialogue with the medical administration in the amount of \$11,815.00 as initial amount to fund the five students for this coming semester. The rest will have to be approved by the BOT in the next meeting.

There was also a discussion on the Professional chair funding not being utilized for the last three years because of restrictive rules (?) to award such funding. The rules stipulate that the recipient must be a full time professor and must have a research project going . . . hence the inability for the award. In this regard, Dr. Ongcapin advised that there is actually an academic committee Chaired by the dean, currently Dr. Habacon, that we can tap to help in this area.

Chairman's Message

(Continued from page 1)

We are doing what we can with our finite resources. Starting this year we are granting five entrance scholarships for the top medical students. We hope to continue their scholarships yearly to graduation so that the number of scholars will increase from five, then ten, then fifteen, then twenty by the fourth year of implementation. Many chapters have pledged support. We hope many more will follow.

The annual homecoming at Fairview, January 2005, provided an opportunity for us to discuss medical education and other issues with the medical school administration and faculty. We will report on these matters at our next opportunity. Meanwhile, please accept my best wishes for a happy, healthy and wealthy New Year.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK:

Greetings! Last August, I was appointed as the Executive Director to replace Dr. Cesar Reyes who is currently on a sabbatical leave. Although this position is a humongous job, I look forward to reaching out to all of you and soliciting your help in actively participating in the affairs of our foundation.

My number one priority is to make an updated and complete membership directory to include the following information: Name, Address, Phone numbers, Specialty, Year of graduation, E-mail address. Please send the data to my attention at **417 Mill Stone Road, Chesapeake, VA 23322** or to my web address: **thelegaspis@yahoo.com**.

I also would like to inform you of the foundation's excellent website: www.feu-alumni.com.; user's name is "feu-alumni" and the password is "Fairview."

I would like to call your attention to the following important dates:

- 1. WINTER BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING:** Date: **March 4-6, 2005**
HOUSTON: JW MARRIOTT (Texas)
Airport: George Bush International Airport
- 2. 2005 ANNUAL CONVENTION:** Date: **July 13-17, 2005**
THE MONTE CARLO HOTEL, Las Vegas, NV.
(For details, please refer to our website or call me at (757) 482-4568 or (757) 651-5200).

We are going to have regular mailings of the Ectopic Murmur and will be sending every member a copy. If perhaps your name was inadvertently omitted for whatever reason, please do not hesitate to e-mail me.

One friendly reminder: It is time to pay your 2005 membership dues. It is important that we hear from you of your interest to be actively included in all of our mailings and announcements. The yearly dues are \$60 made out to FEU-DNR SMAF. Please mail check and my requested information to my address as stated above. Thank You.

So long and warm regards — Jane P. Legaspi '69

THE ECTOPIC MURMURS
1559 W. Big Beaver Road
Troy, MI 48084

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