

EMBRACING THE POSSIBILITIES: Alliance for Health Sciences Builds on Shared Commitment to Community

The Alliance was created amid growing national recognition about the importance of training professionals equipped to respond to changes in our health care environment. It evolved after Dr. K. Michael Welch, RFUMS president and chief executive officer, approached DePaul president Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider to discuss the possibilities. "This was a natural 'marriage' for two Chicago-area universities to team up through a shared commitment to the community and their regional proximity," says Dr. Welch. "Father Holtschneider listened, agreed and we went forward."

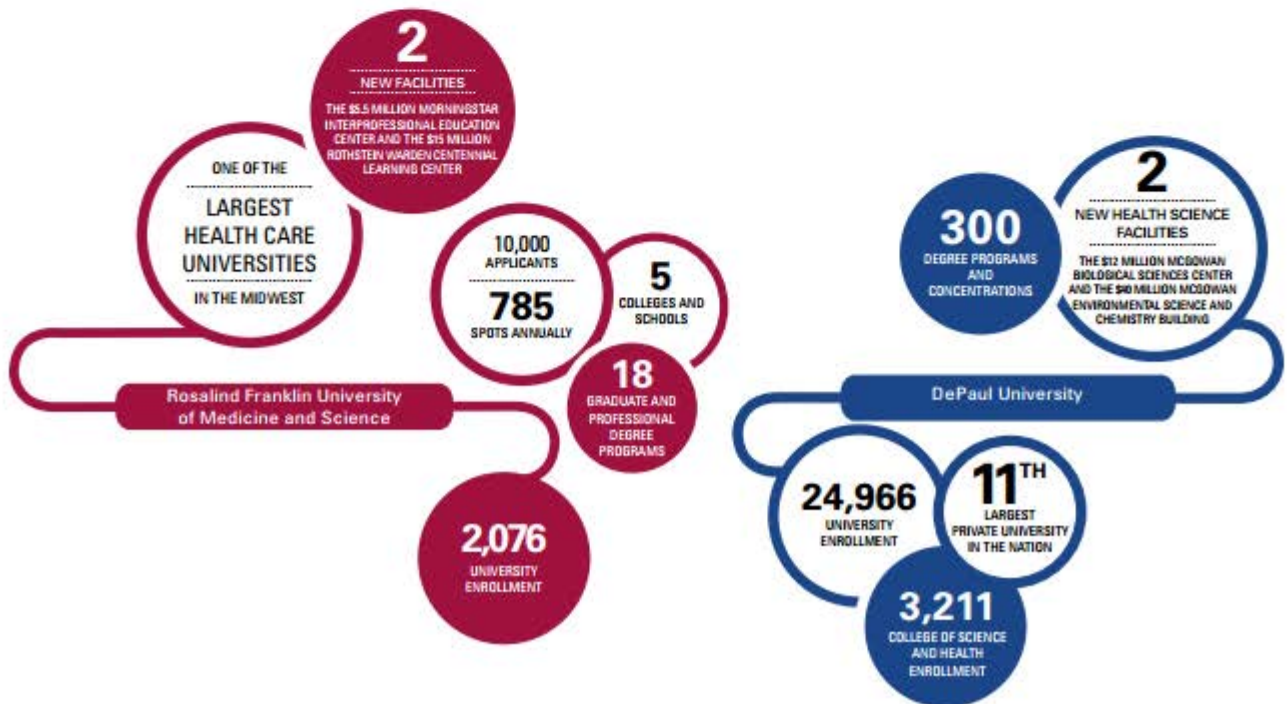
"The United States is facing a dramatic need for highly skilled health care professionals to meet the demands created by dramatic demographic shifts in society," says Rev. Holtschneider. "DePaul was excited by the

opportunities this alliance with Rosalind Franklin University would afford our students and the larger DePaul community to expand health education. It also offered us another opportunity to better serve the Chicago community."

The Alliance for Health Sciences streamlines entry for qualified students into the health professions, strengthens academic programming, deepens opportunities for faculty collaboration and expands research opportunities for students. Together, Rosalind Franklin University and DePaul offer one of the widest arrays of health science programs in the Midwest.

This collaboration builds on DePaul's investment in undergraduate science and health and RFUMS's strong reputation for excellence, particularly

in interprofessional health education. One of the Alliance's earliest efforts was the creation of early admission pathways that will streamline students' progress through their undergraduate work at DePaul into highly competitive master's and doctoral programs at Rosalind Franklin. Through these pathways, highly qualified and motivated students who intend to pursue a career in health care will receive a strong liberal arts foundation, benefit from a contemporary professional health education and have opportunities to train at state-of-the-art health and medical facilities while being mentored by professionals in their desired fields. Students in these jointly developed curricular programs may benefit from reducing by one year the overall time required to complete their professional degrees, allowing them to save on their



Dual Degrees Lead CHP Alumna to Career in Health Administration

Amy Mendoza was still pondering decisions about her undergraduate major when fate stepped in. "I secured a job in a pathology laboratory and fell in love with it," she says. That move led Mendoza to Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science and to two degrees from the College of Health Professions — Master of Science in both Pathologists' Assistant and Healthcare Administration and Management.

"Coming to Rosalind Franklin University was a big step," she says. "I lived in Oregon, where I was raising two young daughters. I knew I wanted to pursue a pathologists' assistant career, but I also had my girls to think of. I needed a place where our quality of life and my education would be good." Mendoza says RFUMS made that possible. "I applied to several competitive pathologists' assistant programs in the U.S. and was invited to interview at most of them," she explains. "But Rosalind Franklin was the best fit for us. With great financial and practical support, the University made it possible for me to come east from Oregon, make a life for my family and receive an outstanding education in the field I loved."

Amy says that being at RFUMS, and seeing the range of educational opportunities available, led to another decision. "While I loved the lab, I saw that my eventual career path might be in an administrative or leadership role," she says. "So I pursued the master's degree in healthcare administration."

Following graduation in 2012, Amy made another move that has impacted her career and future. She was invited to participate in a 10-week summer internship sponsored by the Institute

for Diversity in Health Management Summer Enrichment Program (SEP), which is affiliated with the American Hospital Association. Through SEP, she was placed at Connecticut's Yale-New Haven Hospital, where she worked on projects including helping to prepare for a hospital acquisition by designing the integration of the multimillion dollar protective services department. When it came time for the internship to end, Yale New Haven Health System (YNHHS) offered her a one-year fellowship in healthcare administration.

"I was thrilled to be able to extend my experience within Yale New Haven Health System," she says. "During the fellowship year I continued my work on the department integration and was involved in creating and implementing new business plans around population health management. Several of my projects were focused on laboratory medicine so my training as a pathologists' assistant, in addition to my degree in healthcare administration, was very useful in addressing the redesign of those areas."

"We were not at all surprised to learn that Amy was staying on for a fellowship year at Yale New Haven Health System," says Diane R. Bridges, MSN, RN, CCM, chair of the Department of Health Services Administration. "A gifted, hard-working, outstanding student, she took the insights and skills she learned at RFUMS to one of the country's most esteemed medical centers and, in doing so, spoke volumes about the excellence of Rosalind Franklin University. Her experience also underscores the importance of financial support. Without scholarship help

from Rosalind Franklin University, this amazing young woman might not have been able to pursue the career she was clearly meant for."

Mendoza completed her fellowship at YNHHS during the summer of 2013 and was offered a position in Washington, DC. "I am excited to begin the next step of this journey," she says. "My years at Rosalind Franklin University prepared me well, gave me the opportunity to expand my skills and helped put me on a path to a wonderful career and life for me and my daughters." •

Preparing Students for a Changing Environment

PATHOLOGISTS' ASSISTANT

AROSE OUT OF THE NEED TO ADDRESS SHORTAGE OF PATHOLOGISTS

LARGEST

PROGRAM OF ITS KIND IN THE NATION

22

MONTH INTENSIVE PROGRAM



HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

CURRICULUM INCLUDES COURSES IN



PROVIDING

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO INTEGRATE BEST BUSINESS PRACTICES, MEETING CHALLENGES OF A COMPLEX HEALTHCARE DELIVERY SYSTEM

Students' Research Targets Lake County Community Health

For now, Kristen Lang and Jalia Tucker are happy working behind the scenes, doing research on population demographics and local resources. But Kristen and Jalia, first-year Chicago Medical School (CMS) students, are hopeful their work will lead to better care for underserved individuals in Lake County.

The students are doing preliminary research on a grant-funded feasibility study exploring whether the Rosalind Franklin University Health System (RFUHS) can implement a coordinated care entity (CCE). This is an innovative approach to population health management aimed at creating a cost-efficient, sustainable system that meets the health care needs of people receiving Medicaid and living with multiple chronic health conditions. In this effort, RFUHS is partnering with Heartland Health Outreach, a program of Heartland Alliance, which is a community health organization dedicated to addressing the lack of quality care for Chicagoland's disenfranchised populations.

Working on this project was a good fit for both Kristen and Jalia. "I took a year off after college graduation and spent some time working in a community hospital," Kristen says. "I was struck by how a patient's resources, their insurance status or financial situation can sometimes impact the care received. This was especially true when it came to access to specialized services such as cardiovascular care. That sparked my interest in community health, especially as it relates to access to care. When work on this study was presented as an option for a student project, I knew it was something I

wanted to do." Kristen's work on the project involves researching potential local partners that could provide the kind of services needed in the CCE.

Jalia Tucker, who is researching Lake County demographic data to identify the numbers of people whose Medicaid status and health profile would qualify them for inclusion in the CCE, builds on an academic background in community health. A California native, she came to CMS from Drexel University, Philadelphia, where she earned a master's degree in public health and wrote a thesis focused on the effectiveness of a patient-centered medical home in Philadelphia's Medicaid population. "I am interested in how inequities in access to care can affect health outcomes and life expectancies," she says. "I want to play a part in helping address that, which is why I decided to become a physician."

Kristen and Jalia's efforts support RFUHS's long-standing commitment to providing health care services to people in Lake County. These include podiatric medicine, internal medicine and family medicine services provided by RFUHS at its North Chicago location; behavioral health and reproductive medicine services in Vernon Hills, Illinois; and health care and counseling services

for students of Rosalind Franklin University. Each year, RFUHS serves more than 23,000 individuals who generate approximately 16,500 visits. Approximately 30 percent of these patients are uninsured or underinsured.

RFUHS also takes its service to the community "on the road" through the Community Care Connection, a mobile health unit. This vehicle, staffed by a team of health care professionals, offers a variety of health screening services, including blood pressure; blood sugar/diabetes; cholesterol; body mass index; osteoporosis; and foot screenings. Students from Rosalind Franklin University often assist with the screenings under the supervision of licensed health care providers, which offers them an invaluable learning experience.

"Our presence throughout the community attests to our commitment to improve health outcomes in our own backyard," says Jim Zimmerman, executive director of RFUHS. "The CCE feasibility study is another example of our openness to new ideas that may help improve care." •

