2011 in review

As we look back at 2011, there have been outstanding achievements in all our mission areas as a result of the contributions of each and every individual at Baylor College of Medicine. The College has also had tremendous support from donors in our community who believe in BCM and our missions.

- BCM scientists continued to make important discoveries in both basic and clinical research projects that will ultimately affect the lives of people around the world. We also opened several new research centers to create collaborative opportunities for BCM faculty and fully occupied the Medical Building on the McNair Campus.
- As one of the best medical schools in the nation, we continue to serve as a leader in medical, graduate and allied health student education as well as in specialized training for residents, fellows and postdocs. And in 2011 we launched our National School of Tropical Medicine that will conduct its first classes this year.
- In community service, the BCM students, staff and faculty contribute each day to make our community and our world a better place through extensive volunteer projects in both health care and education.

St. Baldrick’s Foundation awards more than $40,000 grant to Vannie E. Cook Jr. Children’s Cancer Clinic

The Vannie E. Cook Jr. Children’s Cancer and Hematology Clinic in South Texas has received a grant from the nonprofit St. Baldrick’s Foundation to boost research efforts and enable more children to enroll in ongoing clinical trials.

The clinic is a joint effort of the Vannie E. Cook Jr. Cancer Foundation Inc., Baylor College of Medicine and the Texas Children’s Cancer Center.

The $43,595 infrastructure grant was part of more than $21 million awarded by the foundation in 2011. St. Baldrick’s infrastructure grants are based on the need of the institution and its patients, anticipated results of the grant and local participation in St. Baldrick’s events.

St. Baldrick’s signature head-shaving events are its chief fundraisers. Three such events have been held in the Rio Grande Valley and another one is scheduled for March.

St. Baldrick’s Foundation is a volunteer-driven charity committed to funding the most promising research to find cures for childhood cancers and give survivors long and healthy lives. For more information about the foundation, including information on organizing a community event, visit www.StBaldricks.org.

The Vannie Cook Clinic opened its doors in 2001 and has seen more than 5,000 patients who otherwise would have to travel away from home for lifesaving treatment. The Vannie Cook Clinic’s goal is to provide all patients with the highest quality of health care regardless of their ability to pay.

Dr. C. Kenneth Landrum, BCM class of 1954, serves as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Vannie Cook Clinic.

Moyer featured in TIME Magazine special edition

Dr. Virginia Moyer, Professor of Pediatrics and Head of the Section of Academic General Pediatrics at BCM, was named in a TIME magazine feature on “People that Mattered” in 2011. You can read the full feature at TIME magazine. Moyer serves on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and has made many contributions to the field of evidence-based medicine. She serves as deputy editor for the journal Pediatrics.

Ancient mummy visits Baylor Clinic

The Baylor Clinic treats a diverse group of people everyday, but one recent visitor may have been a first. A 3,000 year-old Egyptian mummy on loan from the Museum of Fine Arts Houston was brought to Diagnostic Services at the clinic for a CT scan. Dr. David Eagleman, Assistant Professor of Neuroscience, helped organize the visit. Head over to his recent blog post on his website to learn more about the project, those who helped make the visit happen and to see what the scans revealed.
Schaaf, Potocki author new genetics text

Dr. Christian Patrick Schaaf, Assistant Professor of Molecular and Human Genetics, and Dr. Lorraine Potocki, Professor in the same department, are co-authors of a newly translated textbook “Human Genetics—From Molecules to Medicine” that highlights the genetics bridges from bench to bedside. The third author is Dr. Johannes Zschocke, Professor and Division Chief of Human Genetics at the University of Innsbruck in Austria.

The book, published by Lippincott Williams and Wilkins in December, is based on the German book Basiswissen Humangenetik (authors: Schaaf/Zschocke). The English book is a translation and adaptation, with the most up-to-date information on genetic basis of disease, pathomechanisms, and genetic testing modalities. In addition to its clinical focus, the book also addresses many of the social and personal aspects of individuals who are diagnosed with inherited disorders.

STUDENT CORNER:
Russell Cruz

Ph.D. candidate, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

After completing his undergraduate and medical degrees in his hometown of Manila in the Philippines, Russell Cruz came to BCM to pursue a Ph.D. in Translational Biology and Molecular Medicine. His research focuses on extending the applications of immunotherapy to the treatment of tumor relapse and invasive fungal disease. The work spans multiple disciplines, including immunology, microbiology and gene therapy. He and his mentors, Drs. Catherine Bollard and Helen Heslop, are also conducting several projects representing different phases or facets of translational research—from post-therapy clinical review to refining existing therapies, to going back to the bench to perform more basic science research.

Cruz, who expects to graduate in the spring of 2012, hopes to go into a research residency track that would allow him to be a physician-scientist in hematology and oncology. Outside of the lab, Cruz is passionate about graphic design and gives lectures to students on making presentations.

Alumni Association newsletter available online

The Spring/Fall 2011 BCM Alumni Association newsletter, Connections, is now available online as a downloadable PDF.

Highlights include:

- 2012 Alumni Association award recipients (page 2 – More than 100 nominations received!)
- Projected future reunion dates (page 3)
- Information about a new BCM history book (page 3)
- Class notes with updates from alumni (beginning page 5)
- Tribute gifts received (page 9)
- Top alumni-funded endowments (page 10)
- Offer to add $1,000 in your name to your class/program endowed scholarship (page 12 & 13)
- In Memoriam (page 18)
- 2010 alumni donor list (beginning page 19)
- Reunion 2012 information for M.D. class years ending 2 & 7 (page 24)