2012 STATE OF THE SCHOOL ADDRESS

“Forging Ahead: Defining New Pathways in Challenging Times” was the theme for the 2012 State of the School Address, delivered by E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine. Speaking to a standing-room-only crowd in the MSTF auditorium, Dean Reece said the School of Medicine’s research and clinical enterprises continue to be successful despite a series of roadblocks: “The rising costs of health care, the impact of the uninsured and the under-insured, the discontinuation of stimulus funding from Congress, as well as the flat funding of the NIH budget, have forestalled the growth of our research enterprise and slowed scientific progress,” said Dean Reece. “In spite of these roadblocks, we remain undaunted.”

The federal government has passed the Affordable Care Act, which has been hailed by many in the academic community as a tremendous response to our nation’s growing health care crisis. “This new legislation offers us one new path to our ultimate destination,” said Dean Reece. “But, we must also ‘reprogram’ our GPS and endeavor to travel alternate routes.

New models of health care delivery and non-traditional funding are two of the ways that we can continue to expand our clinical and research enterprises. Accountable care models, patient-centered medical homes, industry partnerships, and private philanthropy are some of the approaches that will provide us with viable alternate routes now and in the future.”

In addition to flat NIH funding, and the phase out of stimulus funding, the federal government has changed its funding policies for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). While SOM faculty—through the Institute of Human Virology—continue to conduct AIDS research and service in Africa, the funding now accrues to the country, rather than the School of Medicine. For these reasons, total grants and contracts to the School of Medicine were $428.9 million in FY12. However, when the figures are adjusted for the phasing out of stimulus funding and the changes in PEPFAR funding policies, research funding to the School of Medicine increased 3.4 percent.

Indeed, the research productivity of the faculty is among the highest in the country, and the School of Medicine remains among the fastest growing research enterprises in the country. Among all medical schools, the School of Medicine ranks 8th in direct expenditures per principal investigator, according to the Association for American Medical Colleges (AAMC). SOM principal investigators exceeded the mean by more than $200,000! This exceptional productivity has moved SOM up in the AAMC’s overall rankings as well. The School of Medicine now ranks 16th (up from 17th last year) in direct grants and contract expenditures among all 138 medical schools. The School of Medicine now ranks 6th (up from 7th last year) among all 76 public medical schools.

The school’s total revenue, which includes grants, nation, state funding, faculty practice and philanthropic gifts, was $885 million. Forty-eight percent of total revenue came from grants and contracts, while clinical revenue accounted for 44 percent. The performance of our practice plan was impressive. Total clinical revenues increased 7.6 percent to a record high of $344.2 million, and total patient volume increased 3.3 percent. Through our strong partnership with the University of Maryland Medical System, faculty physicians treated 1.1 million patients in FY12. Despite the challenging economic landscape, philanthropic funding for the school remained strong, thanks to generous private gifts and endowments, which increased 4.5 percent to $69.1 million in FY12. These gifts included more than $19 million in gifts from private donors, and gifts to fund endowed professorships.

Highlights from the last year are many, and include:

- The University of Maryland completed the most extensive full-face transplant to date in a 36-hour operation at the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center at the University of Maryland Medical Center. The operation involved a multi-disciplinary team of faculty physicians and a team of over 150 nurses and professional staff, and was the culmination of more than a decade of research.
- The Maryland General Assembly approved $4.7 million in new matching funds for the design of Health Sciences Facility III (HSF III).
- The Graduate Program in Life Sciences (GPLLS) continued to enhance the research mission of the School of Medicine with a 11 percent increase in student research funding and 167 publications by GPLLS students.
- Thanks to the outstanding clinical faculty, nurses and staff, the University of Maryland Medical Center has been ranked by U.S. News and World Report among the nation’s top 50 best hospitals in nine specialties.
- School of Medicine discoveries and clinical achievements received extensive national and international news coverage, with more than 100 additional stories per month in FY12.

“We are, indeed, at a crossroads in our institutional history,” said Dean Reece. “Despite the obstacles and the detours we have faced, our destination is in sight and our GPS is locked on our destination. I have the utmost confidence that, together, we will faithfully pursue our original goals, and develop new pathways to guarantee our safe arrival.”
Dr. Jian-ying Wang

Dr. Jian-ying Wang, the current professor of Medicine, has been appointed Joseph and Corinne Schwartz Endowed Professor in Surgery. Wang is a distinguished leader in the field of radiation biology and has made significant contributions to the understanding of cancer and treatment. His research has focused on developing new approaches to treat cancer, and he has been recognized for his contributions to the field.

In his new role as division director, Dr. Wang will take the lead in defining the use of radiotherapists and sensitizers in treating a broad spectrum of malignancies. He will work closely with Thomas MacVittie, PhD, professor of radiation oncology, and director of the preclinical radiobiology program.

“Dr. Wang is an accomplished, National Institutes of Health-funded physician-scientist with outstanding leadership skills and a distinguished career in research and patient care. I am confident he will lead our faculty to new heights.”

Dr. Wang joined the School of Medicine on August 6 from his previous position as professor and chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of California, San Francisco. He is a national leader in the field of radiation-related normal tissue injury and has made significant contributions to the understanding of the mechanisms underlying this phenomenon.

“A ceremony was held on June 13, 2012 to invest Jian-Ying Wang, MD, PhD, as the new associate dean for Development and chief development officer. In his new role, Dr. DeFilippis will oversee the fundraising enterprise of the School of Medicine, while remaining in his position as special assistant to the dean. He has served as acting associate dean since November 2011.

“Development is a critical component of the School of Medicine, enabling and supporting our mission as a top-tier research, patient care and educational institution,” says Dean Reese, who also is Vice President for Medical Affairs at the University of Maryland and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers distinguished Professor at the University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Cancer Center. “I am looking forward to working with the many highly regarded physician-scientists at the University of Maryland to enhance my own research as well as theirs, and to advance the science of radiation oncology to ultimately help more patients.”

Dr. DeFilippis. "Radiation science is changing and improving every day, and I hope to keep the department at the forefront of this exciting and dynamic field of medicine.
Dr. Elias Melhem Appointed New Chairman of Diagnostic Radiology and Nuclear Medicine

E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine, has appointed Elias R. Melhem, MD, a physician-scientist with extensive experience in the research and clinical practice of neuroradiology, to serve as the John Dennis Chairman of the Department of Diagnostic Radiology & Nuclear Medicine.

“The Department of Diagnostic Radiology and Nuclear Medicine is an outstanding leader in the growth and expansion of our research, patient care and educational enterprises here at the University of Maryland,” says Dean Reece. “Its distinguished faculty physicians employ cutting-edge technology to provide the many departments and specialties within our medical school with unparalleled radiology expertise, helping to diagnose and treat patients across the spectrum of disease. The department’s robust research enterprise is exploiting the next generation in imaging technology and techniques. Dr. Melhem is a brilliant physician-scientist with an innovative vision of how academic radiology will be practiced in the future. I am certain that with his very strong record of academic accomplishments, along with his collaborative style and strong interpersonal skills, he will be effective in leading this large department to the next level of excellence and strengthening its position as a national leader in its field.”

Dr. Melhem joined the University of Maryland School of Medicine from the University of Pennsylvania, where he served as the Wallace Miller Sr. Vice Chair for Academic Affairs, professor of radiology and neurosurgery and director of the Division of Neuroradiology. Dr. Melhem took over the leadership of the Department of Radiology and Nuclear Medicine from interim chair William E. Regine, MD, a professor and the Judee & Fannie Schneider Foxman Endowed Chairman of the Department of Radiation Oncology. “I offer my sincere thanks to Dr. Regine for his excellent leadership of the department during his time as interim chair,” says Dean Reece.

“I look forward to bringing a part of the University of Maryland’s collaborative environment and the enthusiasm and ambition of its research scientists,” says Dr. Melhem. “The entire School of Medicine is rapidly rising in the research rankings and scholarship nationwide, and I want to join that process. I feel strongly that this is the perfect time for me to join the University of Maryland and to be a part of that rise.”

Joining Dr. Melhem at the University of Maryland is his wife, Lina Y. Melhem, MD, who has an appointment in the Division of Endocrinology in the Department of Medicine. Her recent marks a return to the University of Maryland, where she completed her residency and a fellowship in endocrinology at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

Dr. Elias Melhem directs a robust research program and has received significant National Institutes of Health funding throughout his career. He currently has nearly $10 million in external research funding from the NIH to support his research program. His research focuses in part on brain function in children with sickle cell disease. His laboratory has used techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to discover that sickle cell causes progressive cognitive impairment in such children. His laboratory also examines changes in vascular reactivity to examine how tumors transform from benign to malignant, in hopes of finding early indicators for this malignant transformation. His team also uses advanced MRI techniques to evaluate upper motor neuron disease in patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.

Dr. Melhem hopes to continue his own research at the University of Maryland and enhance the already strong research program of the entire department. “My goal is to bring the department’s external funding into the top 10 among radiology departments nationwide,” he says. Dr. Melhem also hopes to expand and improve clinical care and to strengthen the department’s educational enterprise, emphasizing research as well as clinical care for students. “Dr. Melhem has led a distinguished and accomplished career, and I am certain that he will elevate our department to new heights,” says Dean Reece.

Change in Leadership in the Office of Information Services

James McNamara, PhD, associate dean for Information Services and Chief Information Officer, retired from the University of Maryland School of Medicine on August 3. “Dr. McNamara has been an integral part of the leadership team and has made significant and outstanding contributions to enhance and expand the School’s information technology infrastructure,” said E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine.

Dr. McNamara was appointed Associate Dean of Information Services and Chief Information Officer for the School of Medicine in 2001. He expanded the School’s Office of Information Services from its initial mission of delivering IT services to the Dean’s Office into an operation that now serves the needs of thousands of members of our academic community. Under Dr. McNamara’s leadership, the size of the School’s data network grew five-fold, and its speed and capacity improved more than 100-fold. These and other enhancements to systems and services facilitated the School’s sustained growth of the research enterprise.

Beginning in 2003, Dr. McNamara spearheaded network and data security measures while serving as the School’s I-HPAA Privacy Officer and Security Officer. He drew upon these early successes to help researchers later meet stringent federal requirements to safeguard their data. He oversaw the creation and management of IT systems that greatly enhanced research record-keeping and compliance. He also worked closely with his counterparts on campus and across the University System of Maryland to implement solutions to shared IT concerns. Dr. McNamara’s local and national contributions to the profession were recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented to him by the Association of American Medical College’s (AAMC) Group on Information Resources.

Sharon Bowser, MBA, the current Deputy Chief Information Officer, will serve as the Interim Chief and Acting Associate Dean for SOM Information Services.
UM Shuttle Hits the Streets

Last academic year, the University community lobbied for a shuttle bus service in several monthly Q&A sessions with President Jay Perman, MD. The administration responded by launching the UM Shuttle this fall.

On Aug. 14, buses began taking faculty, staff, students, and University of Maryland Medical Center employees free of charge on three separate routes that "hubs" at the corner of Pine and Baltimore streets. The routes reach as far as Mount Vernon, the 1st Mariner arena, the West Baltimore streets, the routes that "hub" at the corner of Pine and Baltimore centers employees free of charge on three separate students, and University of Maryland Medical administration responded by launching the UM Q&a sessions with President Jay Perman, Md. the lobbyd for a shuttle bus service in several monthly last academic year, the University community and reliable way," says Flavious Lilly, MPh, assistant and staff to move around the city in a safe, efficient, and accessible to the University, the shuttle will contribute to a safer city, cleaner environment, and better quality of life for those associated with UMB.

The shuttle will operate from 6 a.m. until midnight during weekdays and 5 p.m. until midnight on the weekends and during the summer. Each route will have multiple bases. Take note: There will be no service on University holidays, and rulers will always need to show a valid University or Medical Center ID card. The UM shuttle replaces the Caravan service, which was a site-to-site transportation service available during limited hours on or near the campus. The wait and ride times were long, and only a small number of individuals used the service.

Details of UM shuttle's three routes—BioPark, Mount Vernon, and Federal Hill—can be found at https://www.umaryland.edu/shuttlebus. Additionally, smartphone users will be able to follow the location and arrival times of buses through the free NextBus app. Bus stops will be marked with UM Shuttle signs, and buses will have bike racks, handicapped accessible (both as of October), and are equipped with WiFi. Shuttle routes have been designed to connect with other public transportation options such as the Charm City Circulator and Light Rail.

The University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) Department of Transportation was instrumental in the UM shuttle service's design. "UMCP is considered an expert in university transit services across the country," says Robert Milner, MS, CAPP, director of parking and transportation departments of Public Safety is working for the University of Maryland, College Park. The group attended transportation options such as the Charm City Circulator and Light Rail.

The University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) Department of Transportation was instrumental in the UM shuttle service's design. "UMCP is considered an expert in university transit services across the country," says Robert Milner, MS, CAPP, director of parking and transportation services for UMB. The Department of Public Safety is working with student affairs and parking services to make the new UM shuttle program not only a better transportation program, but a safe and secure one as well. I consider the new shuttle service an integral part of our commitment to maintain a safe environment for our University community," says Antonio Williams, MS, chief of police and assistant vice president of public safety.

"The UM shuttle demonstrates that we have listened, understood, and responded to the needs of our students," says Lilly. It represents our commitment to the safety and security of our University community. And while it meets an immediate need, it is also a symbol of our pledge to environmental sustainability, our commitment to carbon neutral-