



Paula Trief, PhD

Trief Appointed Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs

Paula Trief, PhD, was named senior associate dean for faculty affairs and faculty development for the College of Medicine. In this position, Trief is responsible for promoting faculty development, mentoring, recruitment and retention; oversight of the promotion and tenure process; coordination of search processes for senior leadership positions including chairs; assisting the dean of the College of Medicine in establishing processes for reviews of departmental and senior leadership; and other matters relating to faculty affairs.

"I am thrilled that Dr. Trief is willing to take on this substantial role within the College of Medicine, as she has a unique blend of talents and strengths," says Steven J. Scheinman, MD, senior vice president and dean of the College of Medicine. "She is an active clinician, an educator and a funded investigator, and thus will be able to understand, engage and support the varied constituencies among our faculty."

Trief is a professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science and holds joint appointments in the departments of Medicine and Orthopedics. Her studies address psychological predictors and psychological interventions in the treatment of diabetes, chronic pain, and other medical disorders. She is currently supported by a number of awards for diabetes behavioral intervention trials, including two from the National Institutes of Health.

President David R. Smith, MD, and Jules R. Setnor, MD '35, cut the ribbon when Upstate officially opened the \$10-million Setnor Academic Building at a ceremony on August 28. The five-story, \$10 million, 46,000-square-foot building is the first new classroom space built on the SUNY Upstate campus in nearly three decades.



Producer Mark Muheim and his film crew visited Upstate in March to interview Robert Shprintzen, PhD, and Wendy Kates, MD, (right) for a documentary on VCFS and the International Center for VCFS. The documentary was shown at a fundraising gala in Washington, DC, in June.

SUNY Upstate Partners with Israeli Medical Center to Create International Center for VCFS

SUNY Upstate Medical University has joined with Schneider Children's Medical Center of Israel to create an international center to enhance patient care, stimulate research and foster a greater understanding of velo-cardio-facial syndrome (VCFS), a genetic disorder second in prevalence only to Down syndrome that can cause more than 180 medical complications.

The University of Geneva in Switzerland and Mater Children's Hospital in Brisbane, Australia are also expected to join in the initiative.

"The creation of this center marks a watershed in the treatment and study of VCFS," says Robert Shprintzen, PhD, the Upstate professor who discovered the syndrome in 1978. "We hope through this center to globalize the standard of care for VCFS and to energize and heighten collaborative research into this disorder."

An Upstate study is one of several worldwide seeking to find ways to predict the likelihood that one would develop mental illness as a result of VCFS, as not all people with VCFS develop mental illness. "Patients and their families tell us that the

mental illness diagnosis related to VCFS is an ever-growing concern for them," Shprintzen says. "We must accelerate research in this area to be better able to manage this aspect of the syndrome and provide families with a greater knowledge of how they can help their children."

The center is based on the Upstate campus, which already is known internationally for its work in VCFS. Funding is made possible by private and corporate contributions. A major fundraiser was held in Washington, D.C., on June 13 at the Ritz-Carlton, which included remarks from U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman, and the Washington Post's Ben Bradlee and his wife, journalist Sally Quinn, who introduced a documentary about VCFS and the center produced by their son, Quinn Bradlee.

University Hospital Recognized for Cancer Care

University Hospital has been selected as one of 31 facilities nationwide to receive the outstanding achievement award from the Commission on Cancer (CoC) of the American College of Surgeons. Only six percent of the institutions surveyed received this honor. The CoC Outstanding Achievement Award is designed to recognize cancer programs that strive for excellence in providing quality care to cancer patients. The award was presented in April at the 33rd Annual Education Conference of the National Cancer Registrars Association.

This is the second honor University Hospital has received for its cancer care from the CoC in the past year. In 2006, the hospital was granted a three-year commendation in recognition of its cancer program.



Berger Commission Update

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made with regard to the Berger Commission's basic framework that calls for Upstate and Crouse Hospital to work together in a more unified manner with respect to the hospitals.

While final approval of an agreement between Crouse Hospital and SUNY Upstate remains outstanding, what has transpired provides us with an optimistic assessment of how these two organizations will move forward with regard to the Berger Commission's recommendations, while maintaining our SUNY structure and public missions of teaching, research, clinical care and community service. This proposal will allow both hospitals to preserve their relationships with their employees and respective labor unions, while strengthening the hospitals and promoting quality and efficiency in patient care for the community we both serve.

What is under review is an enhanced affiliation and collaborative agreement between both institutions that puts into place a joint advisory council whose membership will feature equal representation from both institutions and members of the community. The Affiliation Council will review and recommend ways to strengthen our existing collaborations; identify opportunities for further affiliations and new collaborations between both institutions; and facilitate coordinated strategic planning that will include the review of proposals for new clinical services and exploration of areas where efficiencies can be achieved by coordination of certain administrative functions that would require certificate of need or other approval by the Department of Health.

This proposed agreement between the two institutions has support from the Department of Health, whose responsibility it is to approve and implement the Berger Commission's recommendations. This agreement was favorably received when discussed at a meeting of Health Department officials and was said to satisfy the recommendations put forth by the Berger Commission. As a result, we anticipate that we will be in a position now to advance pending proposals before the Department and seek funding from the State to advance the missions of SUNY Upstate and University Hospital.

The foundation for this affiliation and collaboration agreement lies in the long history of affiliation with Crouse Hospital, including the existing Master Affiliation Agreement with Crouse Hospital that outlines such relationships as our Residency Program. It proved a perfect foundation to move these discussions along and ultimately develop this proposed agreement with Crouse Hospital for increased affiliation and the formation of an Affiliation Council to assist with these objectives.

Since the Berger Commission made its recommendations public last fall, we have been resolute in insisting that any agreement with Crouse Hospital retain our public mission under SUNY governance. This agreement does just that. It keeps SUNY Upstate and University Hospital public and preserves our very public mission of patient care, research, education and community service. The agreement does not result in any change to our governance structure with the SUNY Board of Trustees.

Throughout this process we have worked closely with our elected state representatives, representatives from the collective bargaining units, State Health Department officials and our colleagues in SUNY. All have been extremely supportive in moving this process forward in a timely manner.

Our next step will be to finalize this agreement and begin the process of identifying mutually beneficial steps that will advance our mission.

Again, I appreciate your support and your continued service and dedication to SUNY Upstate Medical University.

David R. Smith, MD
President