

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE QUILLEN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE | FALL 2008

QCOM Life Lines



Half Empty or Half Full?

Creatively Finding
Our Way Through The
Budget Challenges Ahead





Quillen College of Medicine Dean Dr. Philip Bagnell (center) and his team (left to right) Dr. Mark Linville, Dr. Ken Olive, Dr. Tom Kwasigroch, and Dr. William Browder.

DEAN'S MESSAGE:

Half Empty or Half Full?

by Philip C. Bagnell, M.D., Dean of Medicine

Creatively finding our way through the budget challenges ahead.

As you are now well aware, higher education in the state of Tennessee has been impacted by the current economic crisis. State appropriations have been reduced for all state colleges and universities, including ETSU and the Quillen College of Medicine, and future cuts appear likely. Our mutual challenge, in the face of declining state appropriations and uncertainty, is to keep our eyes *firmly fixed* on our promising future while weathering this financial storm.

Be assured, we will continue to move forward even if limited to focused and selective advancement, knowing we have the people to help make this happen. In this first edition of *QCOM Life Lines* you will have an opportunity to "meet", through featured articles, three reasons of hope for our future—Dr. Gene LeSage, Dr. Reid Blackwelder, and Barbara Sucher. These members of the Quillen College of Medicine (QCOM) family provide outstanding leadership and are but three examples of our reason for optimism for the future. ◀

Talking Points

- QCOM ranked fourth in the nation for excellence in rural medicine education by *U.S. News & World Report* in its "America's Best Graduate Schools" 2009 edition.
- *U.S. News* also ranked ETSU in the top 25 percent of medical schools for primary care education.

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Fall 2008

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MISSION. ~~IMPOSSIBLE~~

FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION

by Gene LeSage, M.D.

Downturns in the economic environment can lead to unrest, unfocused thinking and sometimes paralysis. On the other hand, the same downturns, if viewed as an opportunity, can lead to innovation and progress, even if the progress is mostly seen after the return of economic stability. There is a silver lining in every experience.

We are in uncertain times, with unparalleled changes in the financial institutions which are having a large impact on government's ability to provide basic services to people, including medical education. This next year, ETSU College of Medicine faces significant shortfalls in funding from the State of Tennessee.

I assumed leadership in the Department of Internal Medicine several months ago as its Chair. Like most others, I did not anticipate this severe downturn in the world economic climate. With these changes, my job to lead the Department through difficult times has become more challenging. Yet despite these changes, the core mission of the Department of Internal Medicine remains unchanged. The Mission is the education of tomorrow's health care providers and the discovery of new treatments by elucidating how diseases occur. With continued focus on our core mission and innovation, I envision the Department of Internal Medicine continuing to improve and moving to a higher level of function and visibility within the College of Medicine and the community.

As an innate strength of the Department, the Medicine faculty and staff are all professionals. Professionals remain optimistic and dedicated to their work in spite of temporary reductions of resources and income. It is a time for everyone in the Department of Internal Medicine to understand the core mission of the Department and the College. We can no longer rely on the tried and true; we must try new things, reinvent ourselves, if necessary, and push the envelope to build a Department that is efficient, effective and sustainable.

At this point in time, with projected shortfalls in state budgets, we need to plan and not panic. We must focus



"We can no longer rely on the tried and true; we must try new things, reinvent ourselves, if necessary, and push the envelope to build a Department that is efficient, effective and sustainable."

— Dr. Gene LeSage, new Chair of Internal Medicine

more on results and less on programs. We will allow for continued recruitment in key areas of the Department. We will prioritize and focus by considering what we do well and reduce what we don't do well. We will continue to follow our strategic plan as a playbook but we must also innovate. A specific area of innovation that is underway in the Department of Internal Medicine includes new types of relationships with the hospitals to improve the service and education mission in the areas of cancer, cardiovascular and pulmonary. Another area of innovation is the consolidation of similar activities that occur in multiple departments of the College. I will engage the faculty to find creative solutions to the new dilemmas arising from the economic downturn. For success, it is important that all members of the Department work out the solutions together. We must find new innovative ways to reward Department members on the basis of good performance.

I look forward to working with the community within the Medical School and the larger community within northeast Tennessee to improve medical care, education and research. ◀

To read more about Dr. Gene LeSage online, go to: www.com.etsu.edu, keyword: LeSage.

TEACHING PHYSICIAN PERFORMS MULTIPLE ROLES WITH PASSION

by Jill Fair

Theatrical masks may not be the first images that come to mind when thinking of a Quillen College of Medicine (QCOM) faculty member, however, within this imagery Dr. Reid Blackwelder creatively finds a correlation to his profession. "It's performance art when you're a teaching physician," he enthusiastically explains. "It has to be passionate, real, and tie in with what the crowd needs for that day...the demands of the moment."

Dr. Blackwelder, Director of Kingsport Family Practice Center Residency Program, recently was awarded the **Outstanding Teacher Award for 2008** by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). "I was very surprised and humbled," he says, reflecting upon this milestone achievement. "I get to do what I love... it amazes me." Each year the AAFP presents this award to the best teacher in Family Medicine in the United States. Those who know Blackwelder aren't surprised by the accomplishment. "Locally, he has been an outstanding teacher, educator and mentor to numerous medical students and residents," says Dr. John Franko, Professor and Chair, QCOM Department of Family Medicine. "He not only teaches them medicine, but also shows them that personal growth and balance in one's life are important ingredients to living a happy productive life." Franko continues, "While this may seem to be rather small, the impact he has had on the thousands of patients each of these residents and students now care for is enormous." Blackwelder's commitment to excellence is demonstrated not only on a local level, but nationally. "His leadership has led to the American Academy of Family Physicians having the best continuing education standards in the world," Franko says.

"I came here (in 1992) because I saw an opportunity to impact people who will ultimately impact patients," Blackwelder recalls. "I came here wanting to make a difference and not knowing if I could. Now I know, 100 percent, that occurs. I am confident of that impact." Dr. Forrest Lang, Director of Medical Education in the Department of Family Medicine, agrees, "Learners of all professions are drawn to Dr. Blackwelder by his dramatic physical presence, are captivated by his dramatic presentation, and are enriched by the content of his instruction."

It has been said that those drawn to this profession don't, in actuality, have the choice.

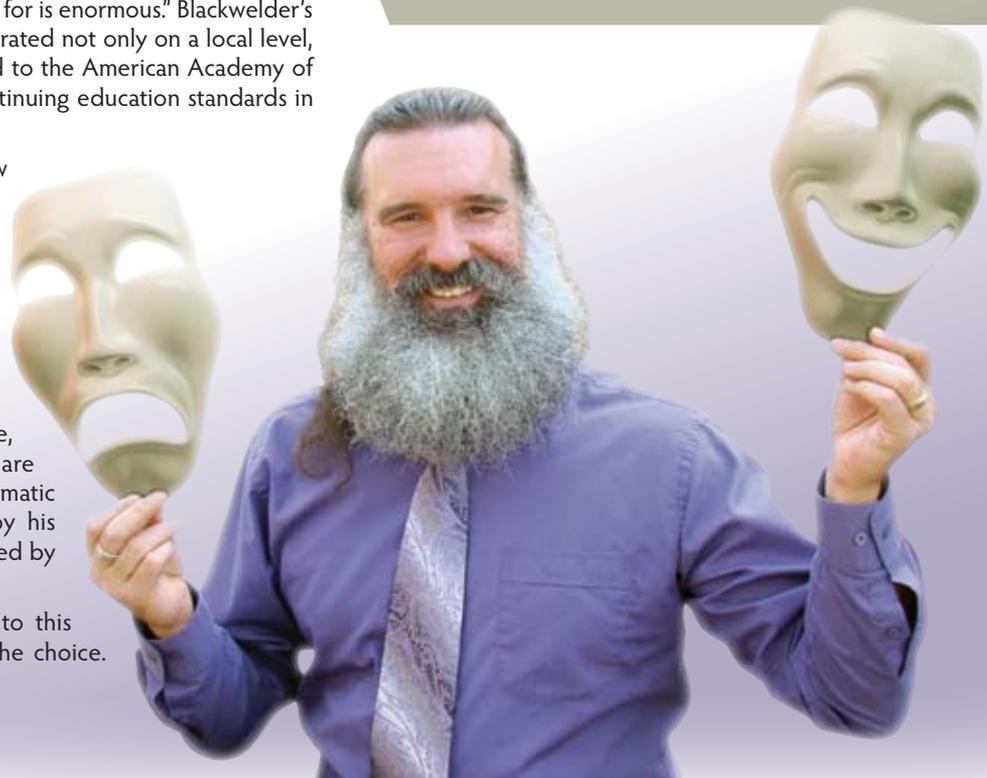
Rather, it is their "calling." Dr. Blackwelder summarizes, "People come into this profession because they're motivated. They are passionate. They want to make a difference. They do it because they have to." How to encapsulate that passion, and maintain it, inspires Blackwelder in working with today's new physicians as he entices each to personally assume the role for the long haul.

Dr. Blackwelder shares a short, telling mantra: "Be all you can be. Be true to yourself." Spend just a few moments with this physician and one will agree the mantra is fitting—a dedicated and passionate person, one who accepts the many roles demanded of his profession, with grace and diligence. ◀

To read more about Dr. Reid Blackwelder on the web, go to: www.com.etsu.edu, keyword: Blackwelder.

NOTEWORTHY

Other distinguished awards received by Dr. Reid Blackwelder include—2000 Humanism in Medicine Award, 2001 Mentor of the Year, Caduceus Club, Family Medicine Attending of the Year from 2004-07, Caduceus Club, 2008 TAFP John S. Derryberry Distinguished Service Award, 2008 AAFP Exemplary Teacher of the Year.



In as little time as ten years ago technological tools, such as the iPod, Palm Pilot and the Avatar of virtual community Second Life, were merely futuristic visions. Today each device has woven its way into our most basic functions, supporting study methods and business practices. "Such advancements make our mission of expanding services and increasing accessibility much easier," says Barbara Sucher, Associate Dean, Quillen College of Medicine (QCOM) Office of Continuing Medical Education (CME).

As Sucher explains, the QCOM programs serve medical students, residents and postgraduates. "While the Office of CME is involved in all areas, our focus centers heavily on the practicing medical physician," she says. A Tennessee physician, for example, is required by the American Medical Association to complete 40 hours of category 1 continuing medical education credits every two years for license re-registration. In addition to QCOM faculty, CME

Talking Points

- Did you know? Over 19,000 people attended over 1,000 ETSU-accredited programs resulting in 47,000 CME credits during the 2007-08 fiscal year.
- Program participants appreciate the convenience of web-based transcripts offered by CME. Personal transcripts are automatically initiated after a participant attends any ETSU CME program. Participants may access their transcript worldwide, find credits tracked with totals, and other pertinent program details, and print in a verified format.
- Call 423-439-8081 to register for the upcoming Medical Challenges Fall 2008 Conference or visit <http://com.etsu.edu/cme>.



CME Associate Dean Partners with a Virtual World

helps non-affiliated physicians meet such requirements and provides attendance credit for licensing or re-credentialing to a host of other health care professionals.

The Office of CME offers its services not only in Tennessee but also in Kentucky, North Carolina and Virginia, producing ACCME-accredited programs to practicing physicians of all specialties. Additionally, the office jointly sponsors programs with many health care systems, regional hospitals, and engages in numerous other partnerships throughout the region. Affirmation of the office's value is evident with CME activities charting a colossal 3,142 percent increase since July 2000, an increase from 1,543 to 19,593 CME registrants since July 2000, and a 1,459 percent growth in CME credits awarded since 2002.

The numbers marching up the chart seem to further motivate Sucher to

Growing Technology

by Jill Fair

the next stage of development as she considers how CME might become accessible to virtually anyone. "CME is looking to work on a worldwide level with educational health care programs, providing as broad a variety of educational formats as possible, from the traditional face-to-face lecture to virtual," Sucher says. Currently, CME is posting audio recordings of various accredited CME programs conducted at ETSU. "We place these recordings on iTunesU (U=University) where they are offered worldwide," she explains. iTunesU is a dedicated area within the iTunes Store featuring educational content. It's accessible 24/7 and allows users to easily search and download course content as podcasts from computer, cell phone, iPod or Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), and listen at their leisure. Sucher determines, "As a result, during a

"Growing Technology" continues on page 7.

QCOM Faculty/Staff News

Faculty Awards

- **Dr. Scott Champney**, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, was awarded the **Dean's Distinguished Research Award**.
- **Dr. Sophie C. Dessus-Babus**, Department of Microbiology, was awarded the **Dean's Distinguished Service Award**.
- **Dr. Joe Florence**, associate professor of Family Medicine and director of Rural Programs, was inducted into the **Gold Humanism Honor Society**.
- **Dr. Mary Hooks**, Department of Surgery, and **Dr. Thomas Kwasigroch**, Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, were awarded the **Gender Equity Award**.
- **Dr. Debra Mills**, Department of Pediatrics, was awarded the **Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Teaching Award**, sponsored by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation.
- **Phillip L. Steffey**, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, was awarded the **Dean's Award for Special Contributions to the Quality of Life of Our Medical Students**.
- **Dr. Dawn Tuell**, Department of Pediatrics, was awarded the **Dean's Distinguished Teaching Award in Clinical Sciences**.

New Faculty

- **Dr. Michelle J. Chandley** is a research fellow in the Department of Pharmacology after working as a graduate student and earning her Ph.D. in biomedical science from ETSU.
- **Dr. Roger deBeus** is a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. He comes to ETSU from Asheville, N.C., and holds a Ph.D. in health psychology and behavioral medicine from the University of North Texas, Denton.
- **Dr. Theresa A. Harrison** is an associate research professor in the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology after serving as an assistant research professor. She holds a Ph.D. in experimental psychology from Harvard University.

- **Dr. Howard Herrell** is an assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology after serving the department as chief resident.
- **Dr. Chad E. Lakey** is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology after earning his Ph.D. from the University of Georgia, Athens.
- **Dr. Demetrio R. Macariola, Jr.** is an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics. He was a pediatrician at Schneider Regional Medical Center, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, before coming to ETSU.
- **Dr. Jill D. McCarley** is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and medical director of Child and Adolescent Services at Woodridge Hospital. Previously in private practice in child and adolescent psychiatry in Athens, Texas, she holds an M.D. from the James H. Quillen College of Medicine.
- **Dr. Olga Sarkodie** is an assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She completed women's health training at Minsk Regional Maternity Hospital in Belarus before coming to ETSU. While at MSML, she conducted research on pregnancy and delivery in women with diabetes mellitus. The Dzerjinsk Regional Hospital also named her "Best Obstetrician-Gynecologist."

Research/Grant News

- Varying antidepressant dosages help women with premenstrual exacerbation of depression...**Dr. Merry Miller**, ETSU chair of psychiatry and behavioral sciences...
- NIH study funded by a four-year \$1.3 million grant, Possible new mechanism to treat pneumonia...**Dr. Alok Agrawal**, an associate professor of pharmacology, and **Dr. Donald A. Ferguson, Jr.**, an associate professor of microbiology...
- ETSU researchers identify a compound that may prevent atherosclerosis...**Dr. Alok Agrawal**, associate professor

- of pharmacology; **Dr. Sanjay Singh** and **Dr. Madathilparambil Suresh**, department of pharmacology; **Deborah Prayther** and **Dr. Jonathan Moorman**, department of internal medicine; and **Dr. Antonio Rusinol**, department of biochemistry and molecular biology...
- Department of Family Medicine has received a \$626,000 title VII grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to implement a new evidence-based educational program for resident physicians in family medicine...**Dr. Fred Tudiver**...
- ETSU study looks at difference between panic attacks and seizures...**Dr. Norman Moore**, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences...
- NIH grant received to study effects of drugs, stress on immune system...**Dr. Deling Yin**, an associate professor of internal medicine; **Dr. Jonathan Moorman** and **Yi Zhang**, Department of Internal Medicine; **Dr. Chuanfu Li**, Department of Surgery; and **Dr. Gregory Hanley**, Division of Animal Laboratory Resources...
- NIH two-year \$150,000 grant looks at benefits of strength training in preventing diabetes...**Dr. Charles Stuart**, professor of internal medicine...
- NIH \$1.6 million grant to focus on possible biological cause of depression...**Dr. Greg Ordway**, professor and chair of pharmacology...

Coming in the Spring edition:

Dr. Ken Olive, new Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs will be featured.

Check out this link

For more information on these stories, visit the **ETSU News & Events web site** at www.etsu.edu/etsu/news.



Dunn



Malone



Manahan



Loyd



Linville

QCOM Alumni Class Notes

Julie Dunn (M.D. '91), associate professor of surgery at James H. Quillen College of Medicine and trauma surgeon/Director of Trauma with Mountain States Health Alliance, was recently honored with a Tennessee Hospital Association (THA) Award of Excellence for Meritorious Service, Medical Staff. Earlier this year, Dunn was selected by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma (AAST) to receive the Health Policy Scholarship.

Dr. Nikhil Patel (M.D. '91) is a gastroenterologist at Gastroenterology Associates, P.C. in Martin, TN. He and his wife, Nipuna, have two children, Namrata (21) and Neel (16). Namrata graduated from Emory University with a major in Biology and plans to become a physician.

K. Scott Malone (M.D. '92) is the Medical Director of the physical therapy and rehabilitation division and workers' compensation program and an orthopaedic and sports medicine specialist at Middle Georgia Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine (MGO) in Warner Robins, GA. The practice was recently featured in the cover story of *Middle Georgia M.D. News*. In addition, Dr. Malone recently established a fund in the ETSU Foundation, **The Dr. K. Scott Malone Essentials of Practice Management Fund**, for the purpose of assisting in the education and training of residents and medical students in the business aspects of medicine practice.

Eric Manahan (M.D. '95), Medical Director of Southeastern Breast Care Specialists and a partner in Dalton Surgical Group, has been named to *dalton magazine's* "20 under 40," the magazine's first annual list of young professionals making Dalton, GA, a better place to work and live.

Steve Loyd (M.D. '99) was recently named as the Residency Program Director and was also promoted to the rank of associate professor of internal medicine at James H. Quillen College of Medicine in July 2008.

David Linville (M.D. '00), assistant professor in the Section of Medical Education, has joined the Dean of Medicine's staff as Assistant Dean and Director of Operations for the James H. Quillen College of Medicine.

To donate to the
Quillen College of Medicine,
please call 423-439-4242
or visit the QCOM web site at:
www.com.etsu.edu, keyword: support.

New Job? Career Milestone? Wedding Bells? Honors or Awards?

We hope that you will take a moment to send us your Class Notes for publication in the next newsletter.

Ways to submit Quillen College of Medicine Alumni Class Notes:

- **Standard mail:** QCOM Alumni Society, P. O. Box 70721, Johnson City, TN 37614.
- **E-mail:** qcomalumnisociety@etsu.edu.

Submission guidelines:

- Include your class year (s) and degree (s) with each submission.
- Include a telephone number and e-mail address so that we may verify the information.
- Photos are limited to head shots only and must be no smaller than 1" wide x 1.5" high at 300 dpi.
- Person submitting the items assumes responsibility for accuracy.

Deadlines: The deadline for submitting Class Notes is 30 days prior to each publication date.

Publication dates:
SPRING - MARCH 6;
SUMMER - JUNE 5;
FALL - SEPTEMBER 4;
WINTER - DECEMBER 4.

"Growing Technology" continued from page 5.

three-month span from June through August we experienced over 7,000 downloads." Before, utilizing the CME web site alone, users downloaded only about 100 programs per month.

Sucher hints at other exciting initiatives being planned for CME, such as online modules and virtual classrooms. "We will only continue to expand the variety and number of programs," she says. ◀

To read more information about the Office of Continuing Medical Education, go to the CME web site:
www.com.etsu.edu/cme.

Do fire breathing dragons live in Boone Lake? Well, not exactly. But dragon boats did compete in the third annual Mountain States Dragon Boat Festival in September.

The waters were filled with 59 teams, two of which proudly represented Quillen College of Medicine (QCOM).

A dragon boat is long and narrow with several paddlers, a steersman and a drummer who leads the crew throughout the race with the "heartbeat" of the stroke. Dragon boat racing originated as one of ancient China's most spectacular traditions. The components of teamwork, a competitive spirit, and just plain joy, all converge with the primary goal of fund raising for the Niswonger Children's Hospital. In its inaugural year, paddlers raised over \$81,000 for the 200,000 children of the region. This year brought a total of \$125,000, which was \$5,000 more than the target amount.

Heading up the fund-raising portion for the two years QCOM has participated in the festival were team captains Jacqueline Vidosh and Larry Waldrop, second-year medical students.

The Dragon Boat Festival is a great opportunity for QCOM's medical students, faculty, and the rest of the community to show their support for the Children's Hospital," says Waldrop. "We were soliciting everyone we could find!" jokes Vidosh. "It was awesome...at least one person from every QCOM department contributed. We enlisted help from the M1s (first year medical students) who canvassed the city gaining participation. It was incredible seeing everyone pull behind us." The first year, Vidosh explains, was a brand-new event for her and Waldrop. "This year we had more clear cut goals and some experience. We were able to raise \$5,600 within a three-week period and on a med-student schedule.

QCOM was able to form not one, but two teams of 21 people. The boats were christened Dragonheart-1 and Dragonheart-2, with a logo and T-shirt design by third-year medical student Larry Friedman. Medical Education Assistance Corporation (MEAC) and ETSU Physicians and Associates sponsored the first boat, with sponsorship by Tennessee Skin Care and Associates, Kaplan Test Prep and Sylvan Learning Center for the second boat. Dragonheart-1 took second place, coming in just behind the local mentoring organization, Boys to Men. The Mahoney's Outfitters team placed third and Dragonheart-2 also finished in the final heat.

"We were excited to be a part of this festival. These students were so motivated," Sue Russell, Office Manager, Student Affairs, says warmly. "These students are working for the good of the children's hospital, the good of the community, and the bottom line is they are making a difference in the quality of the care children will receive."

Our school really focuses on making a presence in the community. We were able to contribute to something we can be a part of, letting the community know we are interested and that we're there for them." Waldrop adds, "Competition is always fun, but the best part of the day is to see how much this community supports the hospital. I feel privileged and blessed to be a part of the Quillen College of Medicine. ◀



Students spearhead DRAGON BOAT effort for charity

by Jill Fair

Balancing Act

by First Year Class President, Tim Wesley

Coming into med school, you quickly learn to survive by focusing on three goals: organization, balance and perspective. Suddenly you realize that 24 hours in a day seems like a rip-off, and that 48 would be more like it. You have to allocate your number one resource very efficiently-time. One minute you're trying to look at the class web site, then at a cd-rom provided for M1s, then a cd-rom provided by the textbook, then the textbook itself, then the lecture notes for the class, then a cadaver, then a lecturer's email, then at Wikipedia, then a helpful link a classmate sent over email, then your watch to see it's 2 a.m., then your cell phone to vent to a friend far, far away (hopefully many time zones behind).

Without balance and trying to have fun, you'll feel like your brain is in a cruel experiment. After a while, you begin to understand what Alex must have felt during the Ludovico Treatment. You seem to turn off all areas of your brain that have nothing to do with memorization and flood that one part until full and then flood some more. It's easy to be in a routine where all you do is go to one of four places: the lecture hall, the lab, your study place and your home. It doesn't matter much what it is you do, whether tending to your prized lint-ball collection or creatively organizing your sock drawer, but get away and talk to some people who are guaranteed not to talk about anything you've been putting in your head lately.

The last thing to remember is learning how to keep perspective. The first obvious reality check for most people is that not getting an A is perfectly fine. Some really struggle with that because they've been getting A's ever since they were the only kid in their preschool class who could color inside the lines. One, they have to realize that if you can't get over perfectionism after getting your first B or C, what do you think will happen to you if you lose a patient? Second, if you had been banging your head on the ceiling all during undergrad days getting high 90s or 100s, you obviously needed a new reference scale, and med school gives that. Former Tennessee Senator, Dr. Bill Frist, described in his biography a time when he was so carried away with being the best surgeon and working hard that he was fraudulently adopting cats from animal shelters so he could practice on them. He realized at some point he had gotten entirely carried away, and hopefully you realize that before things get that out of hand.

I have to hand it to the admissions committee, because they picked an awesome 2012 class - I'll brag on my classmates until the cows come home (sorry Mick Jagger, 2012 are the new rock stars). We're focused on having friends, not opponents, and Quillen does a great job making sure that we're focused on medicine in a healthy way. If you want to be a miserable person at Quillen, you'll be standing out like a pink elephant. ◀

