

Dean's Report, Annual Faculty Meeting May 28, 2024

It has been over a year since we launched the Faculty of Medicine's strategic plan, [Realizing our Ambition: Defining a New Era at Dalhousie Medicine](#). Over the past year, we have taken meaningful steps to address areas of focus within our four streams of work: Valuing People, Excellence in Education, High-Impact Research, and Serving and Engaging Society.

This has been another transformative year for the Faculty of Medicine, as Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick welcomed 40 first-year students, the largest in DMNB history, significant progress has been made to in the development of the Cape Breton Medical Campus, and we welcomed the first class of 24 students to the Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program (MPAS).

I am proud to share some of the many highlights and achievements realized by our talented and dedicated faculty, students, and staff. In this report you will find highlights and updates from the Faculty of Medicine.

For more details, I refer you to the reports from our Assistant and Associate Deans on our Faculty Council [webpage](#).

Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME)

Congratulations to our UGME team, led by Dr. Evelyn Sutton, as they conclude another successful academic year.

We continue to be impressed by Dalhousie Medicine graduates as they perform well on the Medical Council of Canada exams, achieving a 96% pass rate for first-time test takers. Accreditation preparation is progressing with the completion of the Medical School Self Study report, which incorporates data from the Independent Student Analysis.

I would also like to thank our Assistant Deans for Pre-clerkship Dr. Osama Loubani and Dr. Wendy Stewart for their outstanding contributions to our Med I and Med II students and for their work with the Case Diversification Committee. With the work now complete, they have established a process for the ongoing review and updating of cases to ensure they remain current and effective, and a curriculum manager has been hired to lead this initiative, alongside clear protocols for periodic case evaluations.

A special thanks to our clinical education leaders, Dr. Simon Field, Assistant Dean, Clerkship and Dr. Daniel Smyth, Assistant Dean, Clerkship, DMNB for training for our Med 3 and Med 4 students, who consistently demonstrate high pass rates for assessments, including MCC exams, internal exams and OSCEs. Drs. Field and Smyth also supported learners through several challenging issues throughout the year with steady and thoughtful leadership.

Additionally, I along with leadership from the Department of Family Medicine, UGME, and the Dean's Office conducted site tours from Yarmouth to Sydney to review current teaching capacities and identify potential new Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC) sites for 2027.

A big congratulations to Dr. Anuradha Mishra, Assistant Dean Skilled Clinician and Interprofessional Education, who has restarted the UGME Interprofessional Education (IPE) Committee with support from the Faculty of Health and DMNB. This committee now meets quarterly with a specific focus on IPE curricular programming, evaluation and faculty development. IPE will play a larger role within the Faculty of Medicine, as the benefits of collaborative care models become more widely accepted. As such, a new IPE simulation-based course with the Masters of Physician Assistant Studies program was piloted over the past year.

In January we were pleased to welcome Sam Nightingale into the newly created role of Director, UGME. Sam joined the Faculty of Medicine team from the Faculty of Management, where she had been actively involved in various roles contributing to the Faculty's success. Prior to her time in the Faculty of Management, she was the administrative manager with the Faculty of Health. Sam's wealth of knowledge and experience in a postsecondary environment, coupled with her commitment to excellence have already established her as asset to the UGME team.

Student Affairs, under the direction of Assistant Dean, Dr. Suzanne Zinck, provided almost 300 individual sessions to students seeking academic, elective, or personal advising meetings. The team organized mock interviews for the class of 2024 to prepare them for CaRMS, with 120 interviews booked and 72 students participating. Students were provided with opportunities to engage in highly rated education sessions on well-being including family planning during medical school, ADHD in medicine, and the Thriving Together Project, as well as sessions on career advising, electives and LIC. The team has seen a significant increase in students seeking accommodations and has developed working groups to improve accessibility and communication. The Student Affairs team continues to support research initiatives, and engage in strategic planning across education, research, serving and engaging society, and valuing people streams of work.

Things continue to move forward for the development of the Cape Breton Medical Campus which will begin training 30 students predominantly in Cape Breton, beginning in August 2025. This program will have a focus on family medicine and rural health and thanks to the hard work and dedication of many individuals, our milestones for the campus are on track.

In January 2024, Dalhousie Senate approved the rural applicant pathway for the Cape Breton Medical Campus, paving the way for qualified Nova Scotia students with lived experience in rural Nova Scotia communities to receive their medical education at the Cape Breton Medical Campus.

Congratulations to our admissions team, led by Assistant Dean, Dr. Andrea Rideout and our partners at Cape Breton University for their dedication and attention to detail to move us forward.

This year also marked the first cycle of the Black Learners Admissions Pathway, and the second cycle of the Indigenous Admissions Pathway. These important initiatives help to eliminate barriers faced by historically marginalized communities in applying and being accepted to medical school. Congratulations to Dr. Leah Jones, Academic Director, Black Health, and Dr. Brent Young, Academic Director, Indigenous Health, for championing these pathways and for providing supports for learners.

Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME)

This has been another successful year for Dalhousie's postgraduate medical education team. Under the leadership of Dr. Babar Haroon, Associate Dean, Postgraduate Medical Education, there have been significant advancements and initiatives aimed at improving training and support for residents.

There has been an expansion of residency positions in family medicine and the establishment of new training sites in Internal Medicine in Moncton and Family Medicine in Miramichi. The first Maritime career fair was coordinated, and internal reviews for nine programs were completed, involving numerous faculty and resident reviewers.

A restructuring of the PA advisory committee took place, and there was continued internal and external reviews of training programs as part of continuous quality improvement process. New initiatives included learning environment drop-ins, a PA/PD education series, and the introduction of PD 360 performance evaluations.

Efforts to support strategic planning work within serving and engaging society included the introduction of an Indigenous pathway for CaRMS applicants and improved self-identification options in surveys. A planetary health working group and leadership position were created, and a humanitarian trainee pathway was developed with specific tracks in psychiatry and radiology. The postgraduate office also secured a larger professional development fund, reintroduced social events, and held strategic retreats to address common issues.

Over the last year, under Dr. Carolyn Thompson's leadership, Resident Affairs established the Accommodation Advisory Committee to handle complex resident accommodation needs. They delivered wellness workshops across 15 programs, and launched the Fatigue Risk Management project to mitigate resident fatigue. Personal support was provided to 97 residents through 313 encounters, to address academic difficulty, educational/workplace accommodations, stress and burnout, career planning, learner mistreatment and physical or mental illness.

Dalhousie's Family Medicine residency program has seen success, filling all available residency positions for the second year in a row. While many programs nationwide face challenges in filling positions, this accomplishment is a testament to the hard work collective commitment of faculty, staff, and community members who see the value in medical education in their communities. Congratulations to Dr. Katherine Stringer, Head, Department of Family Medicine for this tremendous and sustained accomplishment.

Continuing Professional Development/Division of Medical Education (CPDME)

This was another successful year, as Dr. Stephen Miller is completing the fourth year of his first term, as Associate Dean alongside Managing Director, Ms. Mary Ann Robinson. The unit continues to be in an excellent position as new programs and initiatives are driven forward via this leadership team.

The Faculty Development team has seen significant activity over the past year, focusing on leadership development, anti-oppressive education, and new ventures into artificial intelligence education. Popular programs like the Academic Leadership course, Leadership PRN Podcast, and the Dalhousie Medicine Certificate in Clinical Teaching (CCT) have been well-received, with the latter completing its first cycle and preparing for a new cohort in fall 2024. Efforts are also underway to introduce the Royal College Diploma in Clinical Education to Dalhousie, navigating the necessary administrative processes.

Additionally, the team's staple programs continue to effectively support faculty in enhancing their teaching capabilities.

The Medical Education Research team has achieved national and international recognition for their innovative work, particularly on topics such as Physician Grief and Dealing with Death in the undergraduate curriculum. Their success in securing grant funding and producing significant scholarly work is noteworthy. The Med Ed Roundtables offer crucial support and education to emerging educational researchers within the Faculty of Medicine. CPDME staff involvement in EDI education, bi-monthly operations meetings, social events, and professional development opportunities underscores the commitment to valuing and engaging faculty and staff, although efforts continue to ensure these team members feel fully appreciated within the Faculty of Medicine.

Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick (DMNB)

This year marked the beginning of the first cohort of students in the expanded medical seats at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick (DMNB), increasing the annual intake to 40 students. The New Brunswick Government also approved an expansion of postgraduate medical education in the province. The recent CaRMS match added new seats for residency programs: two in Family Medicine in Miramichi, two in Integrated Family Medicine Emergency Medicine (IFMEM) in Sussex, and two in Family Medicine in Saint John, all of which were filled. As a result, there will be 33 residents in New Brunswick starting their programs in July 2024. Discussions are ongoing about further expansion and the establishment of Royal College programs in the province.

DMNB saw several new leadership appointments. Dr. Julie Copeland became the Senior Associate Dean in January 2024, succeeding Dr. Jennifer Hall, who completed her nine-year tenure in December 2023. Dr. Copeland, previously from the Schulich School of Medicine at Western University, brings her experience as a rural family physician and postgraduate director for Family Medicine. Dr. Daniel Smyth was appointed Assistant Dean of Clerkship in September 2023, taking over from Dr. Robert Boulay. Dr. Smyth, an Infectious Disease specialist from Moncton, previously served as the LIC Director at the Moncton site. Additionally, Susan Layton-Crossman became the new Chief Operating Officer in November 2023, following the retirement of Pamela Bourque, and Melissa Budd was welcomed as the new Director of Operations.

Student and Resident Affairs at DMNB, under the leadership of Dr. Lisa Sutherland, have been busy providing comprehensive support through group offerings and individual meetings, with significant focus on career planning, academic advising, and wellness checks. In the past year, 305 individual consultations were conducted with students. The team also played a key role in accreditation preparation, participating in the UGME Policy Task Force for review and updating of relevant policies, guidelines, and procedures. Student surveys and focus groups were utilized to gain student perspectives and allow for continuous quality improvement. Efforts to expand training capacity included staff role redefinitions and new hires. The CaRMS match process saw 91 per cent of DMNB graduates placed, with 50 per cent of those to family medicine, and 67 per cent to Dalhousie programs. Substantial support was provided to unmatched students to help prepare them for the next match cycle. There was also significant focus given to academic accommodations, faculty development, and educational initiatives to support learner needs and serving and engaging society.

The inaugural Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship Dalhousie (LICD) Retreat took place in Shediac, NB, from May 3-5, 2024, organized by the LICD clerkship leadership and DMNB Faculty Development team. The retreat aimed to establish a community of practice among LICD faculty and administrative leaders from all LICD sites at Dalhousie. Key objectives included designing a Best Practice Guide for new LIC programs, comparing strategies for engaging and teaching LIC learners, formulating plans to ensure a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment, and utilizing evaluation tools and outcome measures specific to Dalhousie LIC sites. This initiative underscores the commitment to enhancing the quality and cohesion of LIC programs across Dalhousie.

Research efforts and supports continue to expand under the leadership of Dr. Paul Atkinson, Assistant Dean, DMNB Research. The past year was marked by successful funding achievements for DMNB researchers, who secured substantial grants from national and provincial bodies, including a notable CFI-IF award for DalCREW. Additional funding awards to New Brunswick researchers highlighted the wide-reaching impact of their work across various disciplines.

These accomplishments were complemented by an impressive array of publications and scholarly activities, with faculty co-authoring 129 peer-reviewed papers that garnered national and international recognition. Faculty members such as Drs. Thomas Pulinikunnil, Petra Kienesberger, and Dan Dutton made notable presentations at prestigious conferences, while Dr. Paul Atkinson delivered keynote addresses at both the 2023 Dal RIM research day and the 2024 Atlantic Medical Student Research Conference.

The BSc Medical Sciences Program

This year marks the ninth year of the BSc Medical Sciences Program and its fifth graduating class. Importantly, for the third year in a row, graduates from the Medical Sciences Program will be graduating with their medical degrees at Dalhousie, a testament to the preparation and education they received during their time in the BSc Med Sciences program.

The admission of the second cohort of the Indigenous and Black Medical Pathway (IPMP) has been enhanced with expanded student supports, including a robust tutoring and exam preparation program. This program is funded through a partnership between the Faculties of Science and Medicine, along with a funding announcement from RBC via Global Health. Additionally, the hiring of a full-time Academic Advisor, Kate Strapps, has significantly bolstered support for students in the Medical Sciences Program.

The IPMP initiative has gained recognition, being presented at various higher education conferences, including a detailed workshop at the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. The program continues to reach out to Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities, participating in Co-op programs and summer camps with PLANS and Keknu'tmasiek Welo'ltimk, and maintaining a presence at Maritime Pow-wows with plans for annual participation. Furthermore, an agreement with the Faculty of Science has secured a John Dingle Science Communications Internship for IPMP students every summer, aimed at developing outreach and recruiting materials.

Office of Professional Affairs

The Office of Professional Affairs launched in December 2022 and is guided by a mandate to support learners facing mistreatment, and to ensure a safe learning environment for all learners in the medical

school. Led by the assistant deans of professional affairs, Drs. Ian Epstein (DMNS) and Samantha Gray (DMNB), the OPA is focused on a restorative approach to addressing reports of learner mistreatment, and the promotion of professionalism within the learning environment.

Expectations for acceptable behaviour are increasing, and accountability is more important than ever. I have been incredibly encouraged by the willingness of learners and faculty to work collaboratively with the OPA to improve the learning environment. Thank you to Drs. Gray and Epstein for leading this work and promoting the importance of a professionalism in the learning and working environment.

Research

Dr. Eileen Denovan-Wright, Associate Dean, Research, continues to work tirelessly to champion researchers across the Faculty of Medicine.

Achieving a full staff complement has significantly bolstered the Medical Research Development Office's (MRDO) capacity to provide services and supports to researchers. There have been improvements in faculty and student programs, as well as CORES facilities, which aim to minimize administrative burdens and provide sustainable infrastructure.

In collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine Advancement team, the MRDO launched two significant funding programs aimed at enhancing research capabilities within the Faculty of Medicine. The Sustaining Excellence Grant Program, backed by a \$500,000 contribution from the River Philip Foundation, and the Transformational Medical Research Grant Program, also funded by the River Philip Foundation with \$2 million.

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), established in fall 2023, played a crucial role in the application for the Faculty of Medicine's CORES program to the Office of Research Services (ORS) to join the university's central CORE system and launched the first user surveys to enhance system and financial support.

Additionally, plans are underway for a biomanufacturing and innovation pipeline in partnership with Dalhousie, NSH, and IWK, which we are excited to share in greater detail over the coming months.

It has been over a year since an extreme weather event caused the water pipes in the Sir Charles Tupper Medical building to rupture, which resulted in flooding and significant water damage throughout the building. The rebuild has been a slower process than anticipated, though we are optimistic that all researchers will be able to return to full capacity in the rebuilt space by the fall. This has not been an easy transition for our research community, and I offer my sincere appreciation for their patience and collaboration as we have worked through this difficult time.

Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program

On January 5, 2024 we welcomed the first class of 24 students to the Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program (MPAS). Announced in 2023, the MPAS is the first of its kind in the Maritime Provinces, and this two-year program provides students with the skills, knowledge, and training required to increase access to care and make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of Nova Scotians.

Launching this complex program with such a condensed timeline required a tremendous effort and coordination from a number of people within the Faculty of Medicine. I would like to offer my congratulations to Dr. Michael Clory, Assistant Dean, MPAS and Ms. Olivia Bachman, Manager, Administration & Operations, for their leadership in navigating this process and for the successful launch of the program.

Associate Dean, Academic (Basic Science)

I was pleased this year to announce Dr. Sarah Wells as the first Associate Dean, Academic (Basic Science). In this role, Dr. Wells will be responsible for leading the development and implementation of the Faculty's academic educational program plans and will provide strategic leadership and support for undergraduate (not including medical), graduate, postdoctoral fellow and professional development education programs offered by the Faculty of Medicine. This is a critical role as we continue to focus on the supports and value of Faculty of Medicine graduate and PhD students, and postdoctoral fellows.

Serving and Engaging Society

Under the leadership of Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed, the Serving and Engaging Society, portfolio continues to be a fundamental stream of work within the Faculty of Medicine.

The Health Systems Science curriculum project charter was completed, co-led by Drs. Wendy Stewart and Daniela Kempkens. Over the year, four "Catalyzing Change in Health Systems" seminars featured speakers such as Danny Graham, Drs. Gaynor Watson-Creed, Ashley Miller, and David A. Petrie, with recordings made available on Dalhousie's YouTube channel. Dr. Brent Young was actively involved in various high-profile engagements, including a Globe and Mail panel on healthcare partnerships and innovation, a roundtable on Indigenous health, and several conferences and meetings, such as the Canadian Cancer Research Conference and the Roundtable Primary Care Meeting with the Deputy Minister of Health Canada. Dr. Young also led initiatives for Doctors Nova Scotia and the National Consortium for Indigenous Medical Education, collaborating with numerous health and academic organizations to advance Indigenous health and anti-racism efforts.

The Global Engagement Committee, co-chaired by Drs. Eileen Denovan-Wright and Babar Haroon, was approved by the Faculty Council and has begun establishing its priorities. Gwen Bartleman was appointed as Manager of Serving & Engaging Society. A Task Force was created to develop guidelines for the "Engaging & Valuing Communities" initiative. Dr. Leah Jones continued her work with the Nova Scotia Sisterhood to improve healthcare access for Black women and is leading the proposal for Centres of Excellence for Black Health in Nova Scotia. Drs. Gaynor Watson-Creed and Brent Young celebrated the Wije'winen Health Centre's anniversary, securing ongoing funding for the Centre, which serves as an academic teaching site for Indigenous health. Additionally, Dr. Young played a crucial role in reviewing professional standards and leading Dalhousie's Task Force on Settler Misappropriation of Indigenous Identity.

EDIA guidelines framed with an anti-oppressive approach are set to be presented to the Faculty Council by the end of the academic year. Continued efforts with Admissions supported the Black Learners and Indigenous Admissions Pathways, and new curriculum content related to Indigenous and Black health was developed. Dr. Brent Young collaborated with PGME to create an Indigenous validation policy for

CaRMS applicants. White Fragility Clinics were hosted for faculty and staff, and Dr. Watson-Creed, along with representatives from affiliated sites, presented on the importance of EDI in medicine. Dr. Young also led various sessions and a "hackathon" for students to design anti-racist healthcare interventions. The RBC Foundation donated \$600,000 to support Black and Indigenous learners, funding essential support services within the Faculty of Medicine.

Together, these dynamic initiatives and collaborations are both driving transformative change within the Faculty of Medicine and setting the stage for a more inclusive, innovative, and equitable future in healthcare.

Dean's Office

The Dean's Office provides administrative supports and resources to enable the medical school's academic, teaching and research missions.

The Dean's Office continued to oversee the implementation of many aspects of the strategic plan by engaging at multiple levels with stakeholders and partners for the launch of the Cape Breton Medical Campus and also provided operational, leadership, and technology support for the successful launch and welcome ceremony of the Master of Physician Assistant Studies program.

In collaboration with the Associate Dean of Research, the Tupper Building Space review project was completed. An Alumni Location project was finalized, featuring an interactive report monitor showing where Dalhousie FoM graduates are located and practicing. Further, there was a rollout and increased use of reporting and analytics software (Tableau), alongside the completion of the Medical Education Information System procurement process, which included additional data analytics modules.

There is also a lot of behind the scenes work in Finance, Communications, Human Resources, Advancement, Building Services, and Planning all under the steady leadership of Ms. Linda Penny, our Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Shane LeBlanc, our Executive Director of Operations, and Ms. Susan Layton-Crossman, Chief Operative Officer for Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick. All are essential for the smooth running of the Faculty of Medicine, and I am very appreciative of their collective efforts and the work of their teams.

Departments

Our clinical and basic science departments play a crucial role in moving forward the educational and research mission of the Faculty of Medicine. Because of the hard work of the departments, and the faculty and staff that comprise them, our learners benefit from a diverse skillset that will ultimately mold them into skilled physicians and scientists. A sincere thanks to the department heads in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick for all that you do.

Opportunity Ahead

With the development of the strategic plan in the rearview mirror, and significant progress being made in our four core streams: Educational Excellence, High-impact Research, Serving and Engaging Society, and Valuing People, your dedication and hard work have not gone unnoticed and propel us forward. I

am extremely grateful for your professionalism and your commitment to our vision of healthier communities.

In closing, I wish everyone a well-deserved break and hope everyone takes the summer to enjoy everything the Maritimes has to offer. As always, I welcome any feedback about what we can do to improve our activities within the Faculty of Medicine.

Kindest regards,

Dr. David Anderson
Dean, Faculty of Medicine