Annual Report for the John A. Burns School of Medicine – Fiscal Year 2021

Major Activities During FY 2021

This report summarizes major activities across the JABSOM missions, and performance against pre-defined outcome measures.

The challenges of the COVID pandemic were met by our executives, faculty and staff. We worked hard to support UH Manoa COVID testing, contact tracing, and vaccination efforts. Our medical and graduate students and our staff and faculty members were some of the first to return to clinical and in-person educational roles. Research was minimally interrupted since the Bioscience Building was kept open and our faculty, staff, and students were able to continue working. Associate Dean Lee Buenconsejo-Lum and Associate Professor Steve Hankins (HI-EMA ESF-8 lead) provided outstanding leadership regarding COVID for the community, UH system and the medical school.

JABSOM has also had a strong year in terms of its philanthropic efforts raising more than $26.8M during the first 11 months of AY 2021. These monies have allowed JABSOM to sustain several key programs which had lost critical faculty and staff due to the down economy and hiring freezes impacting use of tuition and general funds. As a result, JABSOM was able to launch its Learning Communities initiative which strengthens student ties with the community, permits curriculum innovation, and allows for better integration of core skills and competency development across all four years of medical school. This initiative will help align medical school experiences and education with preparation needed for subsequent residency program success. To address additional stress related to the COVID pandemic and the economic crisis in Hawaii, the school created a Professionalism Committee and an Ombudsperson position for mediation between faculty, staff, and trainees as needed.

The medical student education program (i.e., the M.D. degree program) continued to matriculate 77 entering students in July 2020 - up from 62 entering students in 2008 as seen at the time of my arrival as dean. Over 80% of incoming students are residents of Hawai’i. Thus, the school continues to support the educational aspirations of Hawaii’s citizens thus enhancing retention of graduates in Hawai’i (where a significant statewide physician shortage exists -paralleling the rest of the nation). Plans to further expand the class size are subject to additional institutional and extramural funding.

The 2022 rankings for the Best Medical Schools in America were released recently by U.S. News & World Report. The magazine ranked UH-JABSOM at #24 in the Primary Care category out of the 122 ranked schools (selected from approximately 180 allopathic and osteopathic medical schools based in the US). JABSOM is tied with Dartmouth College (NH), the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Vermont. These educational rankings come on the heels of impressive data compiled and reported this year by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), which found that JABSOM outperforms 88% of all accredited medical schools in the percentage of its graduates choosing a primary care residency program.

The AAMC data show that among all accredited medical schools in the U.S. and Canada,

- JABSOM has led the nation the past five years in producing Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander physicians
- JABSOM has a larger proportion of faculty who are women than 88% of other medical schools
- More JABSOM graduates are practicing primary care 10 years following graduation (the time it takes for full training and licensing to practice) than occurs at 78% of other medical schools
- More JABSOM graduates are practicing in-state 10 years following graduation than occurs at 50% of medical schools
- JABSOM medical graduates considered themselves better trained to care for people of different backgrounds than graduates at 99% of medical schools
- More JABSOM medical graduates planned to care for the underserved than graduates at 85% of medical schools, and
- JABSOM led the nation in preparing students to address health disparities in their communities

JABSOM faculty members continued to teach and provide research opportunities for undergraduate, graduate and medical students from UH Manoa and other campuses. JABSOM supports the UROP (Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program), the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Council (Dr. Michelle Talquist from JABSOM is on the steering committee), and the Honors Program. JABSOM has numerous internships via the NIH-funded INBRE program led by Dr. Robert Nichols and via the Department of Native Hawaiian Health Summer Internship (https://www2.jabsom.hawaii.edu/native/news_sri.htm).

JABSOM also teaches undergraduate courses in Medical Laboratory Sciences, Anatomy, Biochemistry, & Physiology; Cell & Molecular Biology, and Virology & Microbiological Physiology at UH Manoa. JABSOM has five MS and Ph.D. graduate programs with ~100 students: Cell and Molecular Biology, Clinical and Translational Research, Communication Sciences and Disorders (Speech Pathology), Developmental and Reproductive Biology, and Tropical Medicine. Medical student research is facilitated via the Research Interest Group (https://jabsom.hawaii.edu/trainees-in-research/medical-students-research/research-interest-group/) and Dean’s Certificate of Distinction in Research (https://jabsom.hawaii.edu/trainees-in-research/medical-students-research/deans-certificate-of-distinction/).

Recently the U.S. News & World Reports magazine ranked JABSOM at #64 among US and Canadian medical schools in research, tied with Rush University (IL). JABSOM continues to rank #2 of all the UH Manoa units in extramural expenditures; this is a major achievement considering the relatively small size of the medical school faculty.

FY 2021 Benchmarks and Performance

1) Launch and champion a Diversity Task Force which will set the vision and priorities for increasing MD student diversity within JABSOM.

Dr. Naleen Andrade is leading the newly formed ‘Apu Kaulike task force, a faculty and community member led task force to increase Native Hawaiian matriculates in the medical school. Also, under the leadership of Associate Dean Buenconsejo-Lum, a series of town halls were initiated with faculty, staff, alumni and students/residents to discuss the national and local challenges associated with racism in society and elements of structural racism perceived in medicine. The JABSOM leadership set a goal of infusing opportunity, diversity and equity goals across all of the school’s missions and accordingly adjusted the JABSOM strategic plan. A cross-school Coordinating Committee on Opportunity,
Diversity and Equity (C-CODE) was established to address admissions, curricular, operational and other factors that will enhance opportunity, diversity and equity at JABSOM - within its programs and educational settings.

2) Assess the overall fiscal impact of a reduction in JABSOM MD student class size as a means to fiscally stabilize JABSOM and maintain accreditation standing.

This goal was tabled pending a better understanding of anticipated legislative cuts following the 2021 legislative session.

3) Continue to grow clinical & translational research aligned with the needs of the people of Hawai‘i.

The JABSOM research program had a banner year in federal grants, in part related to the federal focus on health disparities and COVID. JABSOM FY2021 awards by the third quarter had increased 38.7% (for a total of $53M) compared to FY2020.

4) Continue to create greater alignment of JABSOM with teaching hospitals through a restructuring of the clinical practice plan with the goals of strengthening academic programs and health services delivery in a more stable clinical learning environment.

Significant progress has been made in regards to a transition of components of the University Health Partners clinical care enterprise into the Queen’s Health System and the Hawaii Pacific Health medical groups. Final agreement on key affiliation documents is expected this academic year. This transition will strengthen the health system academic practices and clinical learning environments for JABSOM learners. The new configuration will also allow investment of the health systems in the medical school. In future years, similar investment in other academic health science programs at UH should similarly benefit from alignment of the other health science programs with JABSOM and the health systems.

5) Implement a succession plan for JABSOM leadership.

JABSOM has capable Associate Deans, specifically for academic affairs (Lee Buenconsejo-Lum); research (Mariana Gerschenson); and administration, finance & operations (Nancy Foster), who are increasingly facilitating and managing key operational elements of the school. Over the next 12-14 months, it is anticipated that Associate Deans for clinical programs within the affiliated health systems will be identified as a part of the transformation of the school.
Proposed FY 2021 Goals

1. Prepare for the upcoming 2024 AAMC medical school accreditation. This will necessitate hiring faculty in anatomy, biochemistry, genetics, and immunology.

2. Support modifications to the JABSOM admissions process which will increase the matriculation of Native Hawaiian students at JABSOM.

3. Assess the opportunity to oversee and support the clinical oncologists and associated clinical trials program for the UH Cancer Center.

4. Continue to grow clinical & translational research aligned with the needs of the people of Hawai‘i.

5. Operationalize the greater alignment of JABSOM with the major health systems through a restructured clinical practice which strengthens our academic programs and health services delivery in a more stable and enhanced clinical learning environment. This restructuring will allow JABSOM to deliver an integrated curriculum in health system science, inclusive of other health science units.