Dr. Larry Tobacman assumed the position of Director of the UIC MD/PhD Training Program on Monday, September 8. He came to us from a 17-year affiliation with the University of Iowa where he served as Professor of Internal Medicine and Biochemistry since 1995.

His educational path included a B.A. in Physics, Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa, in 1972 from Brandeis University, and an M.D. in 1976 from Case Western Reserve University. He did his internship and residency in internal medicine at Case Western Reserve and then moved to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute in Bethesda, MD, serving as Associate in the Laboratory of Cell Biology from 1979 to 1982 and then as a Fellow in the Laboratory of Molecular Cardiology from 1982 to 1986, when he joined the faculty of the University of Iowa.

Dr. Tobacman’s research interests include the biochemical regulation of cardiac and skeletal muscle contraction, and the molecular basis of inherited cardiomyopathies.

In transferring his affiliation from the University of Iowa to UIC, Dr. Tobacman was joined by his wife, Joanne Tobacman, MD, who has been appointed Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine. Her research specialty is epidemiology.

His move to Chicago is actually his second sojourn here. He began his undergraduate education at the University of Chicago as a physics major, but after a year was drawn to Brandeis. He is enjoying becoming reacquainted with his old haunts and seeing the growth and development of the city and UIC.

He began his directorship of the Program by inviting all the students to meet with him individually at scheduled times to get acquainted and discuss their work, interests and concerns. Both he and the students found these meetings to be enjoyable and productive. Armed with numerous ideas of ways to enhance the Program when he arrived, he found these discussions helpful in assessing the “personality” of the Program, and zero in on the most urgent needs.

Acting on this information right away, he drafted a memo to the entire COM faculty—clinical and academic—to introduce himself and his ideas and invite them to join one of three new or reformatted committees: Programming, Student Affairs and Admissions. In inviting their help to optimize both the students’ training and the favorable impact of the MD/PhD Program on UIC, he stated the following as his goals:

(continue on p. 6)
Passing the Gavel Ceremony & Reception Held September 24

Dr. Edward P. Cohen, the Director of the MD/PhD Program for the last 10 years, officially turned over the directorship to Dr. Larry S. Tobacman in a warm-hearted ceremony and reception on September 24. The festivities, presided over by Student Affairs Committee President, Nate Stitzel, with the help of Mike Broman, consisted of Reminiscences and Tributes by various students and Program Coordinator, Roberta Bernstein; the presentation of a thank-you gift from the students to Dr. Cohen, a watch inscribed “for all the times that you have touched our lives”; a talk by Dr. Cohen in which he reflected on the accomplishments of his administration and charged the new director with the tasks that lie ahead; a talk by Dr. Tobacman, thanking Dr. Cohen for his work in building the Program and for his sage advise for the future; the presentation of a welcome gift from the students to Dr. Tobacman, a College of Medicine sweatshirt, and the presentation by Roberta of a short (10-slide) Power Point welcome to Dr. Tobacman. Many faculty members joined the almost total complement of MD/PhD students in attending the event and expressing their gratitude to Dr. Cohen and hearty welcome to Dr. Tobacman. Of course, good food and drink were abundant for all to enjoy in celebration together of this happy event.

Awards, Honors and Publications

Congratulations to the following MD/PhD students who have defended their doctoral theses since our last issue in April:

**Andrea Birnbaum** – April 1, 2003
Department of Biological Sciences
Advisor: R. Paul Malchow, PhD

**Sapan Desai** – August 7, 2003
Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology
Advisor: Anna Lysakowski, PhD
Thesis: “Quantitative Morphology of Rodent Vestibular Organs and Efferent Innervation Patterns in the Chinchilla”

**Cristiane Lin** – August 8, 2003
Department of Molecular Genetics
Advisor: Lester Lau, PhD
Thesis: “CCN3-induced Activities in Cutaneous Wound Healing, Angiogenesis, and Proliferative Restenosis”

**Kharma Foucher** – October 7, 200
Department of Bioengineering
Advisor: Debra Hurwitz, PhD
Thesis: “Hip Joint Loading in Subjects with Total Hip Replacements”

**Library Established**
Last June, Brenton Mar donated a small selection of Step 1 boards review books to form the cornerstone of a Program Library. Students are urged to make additional donations and to borrow books as desired.

Wedding Bells

Congratulations to:

Michelle Muza and David Moons on their marriage on July 5 in Chicago.

Phoebe Lin on her marriage to Bill Tang on Sept. 6 at the Cuneo Museum and Gardens in Vernon Hills, IL. Bill is an Associate Director at SBC/Ameritech.

Kharma Foucher on her engagement on May 24, her birthday, to Boston musician Matt Pakulski. Matt is the singer for the Boston area punk band ‘Fat Day” and the office manager for professional harpist Deborah Henson-Conant.
Fifteen MD/PhD students gave oral or poster presentations on their individual thesis research projects at the Programs 6th annual Research Symposium, held in the College of Medicine Faculty Lounge Conference Room, on August 27, 2003. Between the morning poster session and the afternoon oral presentations, the Program welcomed Dr. Jack Kaplan, PhD, the new head of the recently reconstituted Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics, as the faculty speaker. Program students voted on the best poster and oral presentations. The winners, who received a certificate of commendation and an award of $50 each, were Ajay Nemani for poster and Michelle Muza-Moons for oral. Following the day-long symposium, a reception to welcome the new students and director designate, Larry Tobacman, was held in the Faculty Lounge. Many faculty members joined the Program participants in lively conversation over delicious hors d’oeuvres, desserts and beverages.

The program of the symposium follows and photos of the symposium and reception fill pages 4 and 5.

**Poster Presentations:**

**Juliana Choi**, Department of Surgical Oncology, College of Medicine; Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy, College of Pharmacy. *Ixocarpalactone A Induces Apoptosis and G2 Arrest in Human Colon Cancer Cells.*

**Jack Collins**, Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology: *Signal Transduction of GIRK Inhibition by Substance P.*

**Phoebe Lin**, Dept. of Pharmacology: *A Novel Mechanism of Lymphocyte Apoptosis Through the G-protein-coupled Receptor, G2A.*

**Brenton Mar**, Dept. of Molecular Genetics: *5qNCA, The Putative del(5q) Tumor Suppressor Gene, Is A Co-Repressor of the Retinoic Acid Receptor And Binds c-Myb.*

**Masakatsu Nanamori**, Department of Pharmacology. *Selective Loss of Receptor Functions Resulting from C126W Mutation in the Formyl Peptide Receptor.*

**Ajay Nemani**, Dept. of Physiology: *Monte Carlo Estimation of Test Sensitivity in BOLD Contrast fMRI*

**Evan Osmundson**, Dept. of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics: *New Mouse Models for the Study of Ovarian Function Using Inducible Tissue-Specific Gene Knockout/Overexpression.*

**George Scaria**, Dept. of Molecular Genetics: *The Role of Drosophila MYB During Embryogenesis*


**Keynote Faculty Presentation:**

**Jack Kaplan, PhD**, Benjamin Goldberg Professor and Head, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics: *Metal Homeostasis in Healthy and Disease States*

**Student Oral Presentations:**

**Michelle Muza**, Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology: *Infection with EPEC Disrupts Cell Polarity Allowing Basolateral Membrane Proteins to Migrate Apically and Potentiate Physiologic Consequences.*

**Donny Hoang**, Dept. of Anatomy & Cell Biology: *Ionic and Signal Transduction Mechanisms of Sleep and Arousal: Orexin effects on Inward Rectifier Potassium Channels.*

**Mike Broman**, Department of Pharmacology: *The Role of Cdc42 in the Maintenance of Endothelial Cell Adherens Junctional Complexes.*

**David Jho**, Dept. of Pharmacology: *Angiopoietin-1 prevents increase in endothelial permeability by inhibiting calcium entry.*

**Ronald Jackups**, Dept. of Bioengineering: *Interstrand Interactions in Barrel Membrane Proteins*

**David Ramsey**, Dept. of Physiology and Biophysics: *Physiological Effects of Osmotic Stress on Retinal Horizontal Cells.*
Research Day Photos

Poster presenters (l. to r.) Brenton Mar, Ajay Nemani, and George Scaria

Michelle Muza-Moons, best oral presenter

Enjoying the Welcome Reception

Jack Collins, poster presenter

Nate Stitziel, poster presenter

David Ramsey, oral presenter

Juliana Choi explaining poster to Dr. Tobacman
Masa Nanamori, poster presenter

David Jho, oral presenter

Quan (Donny) Hoang, oral presenter

Keynote Speaker, Dr. Jack Kaplan

Ron Jackups, oral presenter

Phoebe Lin, poster presenter

Poster presenter, Evan Osmundson (r) with Dr. Tobacman

Mike Broman, oral presenter
1st Annual MD/PhD Service Day Held September 6

Under the leadership of David Ramsey, eight other MD/PhD students donated a whole day of their time and effort on Saturday, September 6 to volunteer at the Port Ministries at 5140 S. Ashland Avenue. Joining David in a day of service to the Port Ministries were Benjamin Avner, Rahul Dave, Anada Fine, David Jho, Arpita Kadakia, Irene Klein, Evan Osmundson and Roy Smetana.

This Port Ministries, which has served the Back of the Yards neighborhood for 19 years, is proud of the fact that “during our history of service we have had all denominations of Christians, Jews, Moslems, and Hindus by our side. We serve the basic needs of the poor and that is what draws so many volunteers to us.” Recently they bought a building and opened the Port Medical Clinic for the Homeless. This free clinic is staffed totally by volunteer doctors. The building also serves a lodging for their out of town volunteers. Another service that Port Ministries offers is The Mantel, a learning center for mothers who want to learn English (ESL), GED or computer skills. While they learn, volunteers watch over their children. A third facility is their Bread Truck which goes out to the neighborhood to feed the children. Volunteers prepare sandwiches, distribute them and clean up. One more facility is the Theresa House, a transitional shelter which houses 65 residents, including many children who are supervised and entertained by volunteers. On September 6, the center needed people to man the bread truck and so the nine MD/PhD volunteers were assigned there, but it is hoped that future volunteers will be able to give some service in the clinic, as Rahul Dave has already done.