"It’s an interesting time" to be graduating, Dean Harris Berman told the medical graduates at the 122nd commencement ceremonies for the School of Medicine, while reminding them that the reasons they entered medicine in the first place—the desire to care for their patients in compassionate and effective ways—had not gone anywhere. “There are new organizational models and payment systems, and you will be asked to do more with less, but patients will trust in you and confide in you, just like always,” he noted. Angela Kang, the medical class president, recalled the class’s long journey “that started with blood and brains” in the first-year anatomy class. When a snowstorm threatened to halt studies one winter day, students and faculty made it into class regardless. “We are proud and grateful,” declared Kang, who also received a master’s in public health. “My fellow graduates, we take an exhilarating step forward today.”

Naomi Rosenberg, dean of the Sackler School of Graduate Biomedical Sciences, exuded pride in her remarks at the 34th commencement. “I’m very pleased with your achievements,” she told the graduates. “All of you have found challenges in your work, and you’ve met and mastered these challenges in wonderful ways.” Holly Ponichtera, who gave the Sackler student address, had The Wizard of Oz on her mind as she thought back over her classmates’ path to the present hour. A yellow brick road of sorts had brought them all to a moment where America still leads the world in biomedical research, a status that seems unthreatened, despite ongoing NIH budget cutbacks. They were now prepared to enter this realm.

Aviva Must, dean of Public Health and Professional Programs opened the PHPD Commencement exercises, telling graduates that although issues that confront public health continually change, many of the tools remain the same—tools they have gained through the PHPD programs. “The responsibility is now yours to keep up that education, and stay abreast of new information and, most importantly, consider new perspectives.” Three Double Jumbos spoke at the ceremony: Sarah Soffer, MPH’14 gave the class address; Laura Lessard, PhD, MPH’05 gave the alumni address; and Jonathan Epstein, DVM/MPH’02, gave the faculty address.
Members of the Physician Assistant Program received their white coats at a ceremony on April 25.

World Health Day 2014

Maintenance of adequate growth during the first 1,000 days of a child’s life, starting at conception, is critical. If that window of opportunity is lost, the potential to grow, learn, and rise out of poverty is diminished as well. Guatemala suffers from the highest rate of child malnutrition in the Western Hemisphere and the fourth highest in the world: almost half of Guatemalan children under the age of five are chronically malnourished. The government of Guatemala recognizes that malnutrition is costly for the country not only in human terms, but also in economic terms. The government, private sector, and civil society have partnered to reduce maternal and child malnutrition by implementing cost-effective actions that optimize nutrition in these vital first 1,000 days.

On April 7, Tufts Public Health commemorated World Health Day 2014 by inviting Dr. Patricia Palma de Fulladolsa, the director of the Regional Program for Food Security and Nutrition for Central America, and Mr. Alejandro Biguria, a leading Guatemalan architect and one of the founding members of Despertemos Guatemala, an initiative that promotes awareness campaigns, to share these actions with the Tufts community through an exhibition and symposium.

Also participating in the symposium, and speaking on their relevant research on maternal and child health, were Dean Aviva Must, Director of the Tufts Center for Global Public Health Mikaya Mwamburi, Dr. Sarbattama Sen from the Floating Hospital’s Mother Infant Research Institute, and Dean for Global Health and Multicultural Affairs Joyce Sackey.

Reunion Weekend

During May 2-4, TUSM welcomed back over 300 alumni and friends to campus to celebrate their reunions. Alumni celebrating their 5th – 60th reunion participated in a variety of activities throughout the weekend. Highlights included the alumni talks by the Class of 1964 (a unique panel discussion on how TUSM not only prepared them for their medical careers but also for careers post medicine and alternative careers in medicine) and the Class of 1969 (a panel discussion on various career paths taken (and not) by members of their class). Attendees also participated in student-lead campus tours and two cocktail receptions and class dinners.

Dean Harris Berman and the Tufts Medical Alumni Association (TMAA) awarded eight alumni with Dean’s Awards for their achievements in medicine and the community over the past 50 and 25 years: Gerald DiBona, MD, Deborah Gilman, MD, Michael Gilman, MD, and John Paraskos, MD, from the Class of 1964 and Scott Cohen, MD, William Goodman, MD, MPH, Marc Shapiro, MD, and Andrea Zuckerman, MD from the Class of 1989.
News of Note

Michael Wagner, MD, FACP, has been named President and Chief Executive Officer of Tufts Medical Center and Floating Hospital for Children. Dr. Wagner has served as Interim President and CEO since September. He first joined the Tufts family more than 25 years ago. He began his career in Tufts Medical Center’s internal medicine practice and has since served as Chief of General Medicine, Chief of Internal Medicine and Adult Primary Care, Chief Medical Officer, and President and CEO of the Tufts Medical Center Physicians Organization. Dr. Wagner has shared with us his commitment to continuing to partner with all members of the Tufts community -- including our faculty, students and staff -- to advance patient care and train the next generation of compassionate health care professionals.

William Bachovchin, PhD, professor of Developmental, Molecular and Chemical Biology and Jatin Roper, MD, assistant professor of Medicine are the recipients of a grant from the Stephen and Marie Rozan Research Fund for their project entitled “Selective Targeting of Tumor Fibroblast to Activate Tumor Immunity”. This project brings together Bachovchin, an expert in the drug design who has developed molecules that target proteases and Roper, an expert in murine models of carcinogenesis. Together, they will determine if targeting a molecule called FAP (fibroblast activation protein), that is over-expressed on stromal cells associated with tumors, will decrease tumor progression.

The Massachusetts Medical Society has recognized students from the state’s medical schools for their outstanding academic performance and community involvement, including four from TUSM. Recent graduates Tess Jasinski, Angela Kang, Christian Pulcini, and Joshua St. Louis, were named Massachusetts Medical Society Scholars for 2014. Each will receive a $10,000 scholarship from the Society.

The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship selected four TUSM students to its class of 2014-2015 Boston Schweitzer Fellows: Connie Chung, MBS’15, Angela Coombs, M15, Amy Ni, M15, and Vaidehi Pidaparti, M17. These students will spend the next year learning to effectively address the social factors that impact health, and developing lifelong leadership skills. In doing so, they will follow the example set by famed physician-humanitarian Albert Schweitzer, for whom their Fellowship is named. Schweitzer Fellows develop and implement service projects that address the root causes of health inequities in under-resourced communities, while also fulfilling their academic responsibilities. Each project is implemented in collaboration with a community-based health and/or social service organization.

New Dean for International Affairs

Richard M. Dupee, MD, FACP, AGSF, FRSM, a graduate of Tufts College and TUSM, is professor of medicine at TUSM and chief of the Geriatrics Division at Tufts Medical Center. He teaches and mentors students and medical residents, in the classroom and in the clinic, and hosts a fourth-year geriatrics rotation in his practice in Wellesley. He also is on the faculty of the Physician Assistant program, providing geriatrics lectures, and mentoring students in his office during their clinical rotations.

Dr. Dupee is former governor of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American College of Physicians, and currently president of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Geriatrics Society, where he has been instrumental in establishing national guidelines for geriatric education, both at the medical student and residency levels. He is the founder and CEO of Wellesley Medical Associates, a highly respected internal medicine and geriatrics practice associated with Tufts Medical Center, and the founder and medical director of the Alliance for Quality Care (AQC), a local care organization, as part of the New England Quality Care Alliance (NEQCA).

Dr. Dupee has won numerous awards in geriatrics and internal medicine, including selection as a “Top Docs” in geriatrics by Boston Magazine for the past four years, and by Castle Connolly as one of the foremost geriatricians in the United States. He won the “Rx for Excellence” recipient award for superiority in risk management and patient safety for the Medical Law Report, and is consistently listed in “America’s Top Physicians”: Consumers Research Council, and “Top Doctors in Boston, As Chosen By Their Peers”: Boston Consumer’s Checkbook. In May of 2013, Dr. Dupee was presented the “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the New Hampton School, in recognition of exceptional achievement in his personal and professional work. He is enthusiastic and excited to take on his new responsibilities as Dean for International Affairs.