

# Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

## FREE\* Newsletter

\*(Faculty Resources for Educational Excellence)

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#### Quote of the Month

*Mindless habitual  
behavior is the enemy of  
innovation.*

*Rosabeth Moss Kanter*

### Create an Explosion!

What an outstanding 2<sup>nd</sup> annual TEACH Education Day! This year's event, held on October 13, was filled with events related to highlighting and developing our faculty's skills in education scholarship. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Rebecca Blanchard from Baystate Health and the University of Massachusetts Medical School, repeated her informative and motivating presentation on Strategies for Successful Education Scholars at 7:00 am, 12 noon, and 5:30 pm.

In addition, three of our very own internal faculty and staff, Ms. Deirdre Rae (Turning Innovation into a Poster), Ms. Mary Catherine Santoro (Making the Most out of Your Library Resources), and Dr. Jeannie Garber (Moving from Poster to Publication) repeated practically-oriented breakout sessions at 11:00 am and 4:30 pm. Also, the hallways of the medical school were adorned with posters related to education that our faculty have presented at local, regional, and national conferences over the past 2 years.

Dr. Blanchard used a well-known eruption experiment to set the stage. She paralleled combining Mentos and Diet Coke within the structure of a bottle to harnessing the interaction of our enthusiasm for teaching (Mentos) and curiosity about how to teach better (Diet Coke) in the form of education scholarship (bottle).

In particular, Dr. Blanchard offered four key strategies for us all to use to either get started on or enhance our education scholarship experiences. According to her, we all could benefit from:

1. **Finding a mentor.** This should be someone to help build your idea and understand the game of education scholarship.
2. **Finding your posse.** This should be a collaborative group of similarly interested colleagues who have skills and expertise complementary to your own. For example, if you are interested in the process, but don't know where to start with measurement and don't love the numbers, team up with a colleague who is skilled in evaluation and another who excels in statistics.
3. **Joining the conversation.** You don't necessarily have to start out with a high-level publication. Start by discussing your ideas locally and move into presenting them as a poster or a workshop at a conference. You should ultimately incorporate the feedback you receive from each of these into a well-developed manuscript.
4. **Writing!** Don't keep waiting for some free time to appear. It's not going to happen. You need to carve out the time to write...and stick to it!

Let us know if you need help incorporating these strategies! Through TEACH, we have developed an excellent cadre of education mentors and we are beginning to form some education scholarship support groups to help you to begin to join the conversation and collaborate in ways that can make strategy #4 seem less intimidating.

If you weren't able to make it to Education Day this year, you're in luck. We recorded each session and have posted them on our TEACH website:

<https://info.vtc.vt.edu/teach/educator-development/teaching-session-videos/education-day-videos/>

Shari Whicker, EdD



# Dean's Corner

## Cynda Johnson, MD, MBA

October 2016

Last month our M1s received their white coats, a tradition carried out by just about every medical school in the country. Our White Coat Ceremony is rooted in a unique set of interrelated learning experiences that prepare our students for the responsibility of wearing a white coat.

Our pre-white-coat curriculum consists of senior practitioners who deliver a series of memorable anecdotes and words of wisdom followed by moving discussions reflecting on the theme “What’s in Your White Coat?” Each student composes an essay around the same theme, and each class develops its own set of Guiding Principles. By the time the ceremony occurs, students have a deep sense of humanism and reverence for the doctor-patient relationship.

A survey we conducted of medical schools in the United States and Canada showed 61 percent of responding schools awarded first year students their white coats much earlier than we did—either during orientation or early in the first block of study. Responses also indicated a minority—approximately 30—offer some sort of white coat preparation, but few, if any, had a curriculum as involved as ours.

One of our students, Jordan Taylor, compared the union with his white coat to an arranged marriage. “I have yet to meet my bride,” he said in his essay. “Nevertheless, we know our responsibility, bound ceremonially to uphold our sacred oath.”

Cynda