

MEDICAL HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM

2004 ACMC-CAME Annual Meeting

Sunday – April 25, 2004 – 12:30-15:30

Early in the Spring of 2003, a group of medical students at Dalhousie University began discussing the possibility of hosting a medical humanities symposium. Upon learning that the 2004 ACMC-CAME Annual Meeting would be hosted in Halifax, student organizers approached the ACMC planning committee. With the support of the Dalhousie Medical Humanities Program, Alumni Association, Dean's Office, and local planning committee, a proposal was submitted and subsequently accepted by the ACMC organizers.

Dalhousie's Medical Humanities program is now more than a decade old, and through the vigorous support of students, staff and faculty it has become a vital part of the medical school community. Students can participate in several established programs, such as "Music in Medicine", "History of Medicine", the annual Art Show, as well as creative medical writing and narration. Funding is also made available to students for research and humanities projects which fall outside the scope of established programs.

Students at Dalhousie feel that the Humanities Program provides them with a unique perspective on both clinical problems and the patient-physician relationship. *"I find the medical humanities help me to appreciate the issues around illness and healing which fall outside the scope of what can be provided in a textbook."* says Yoko Schreiber, a third year student at Dalhousie. Yoko says that she strongly believes that creating art and writing about experiences on the ward can be a helpful outlet for students to deal with ethical dilemmas and difficult issues such as end-of-life care.

The student organizers at Dalhousie hope to encourage other students who will be attending to initiate or develop humanities programs at their schools. *"This is really intended to be an opportunity for discussion and exchange of information between medical students and faculty"*, says Jan Benedict, who is helping to organize the event. *"We would like to share our experiences, and our strong belief that the medical humanities have a vital role to play in medical education"*.

The symposium will feature Dr. Jock Murray as the keynote speaker and will include student presentations and discussion on selected topics. Organizers are encouraging everyone who is interested in learning more about the medical humanities to attend, particularly other student delegates at the conference. For more information, please contact Jan Benedict at benedict@dal.ca.