

A talk with Dr. Dorsey

For three years, Dr. Dorsey has been dean of the School of Medicine. Aspects sat down with him for an update on some projects near and dear to his heart.

Physically, the School has grown a lot in the past few years. The SIU Cancer Institute is continuing that growth. How are the plans developing?

It's very exciting for me to be a part of this development. We've bought land at Rutledge and Carpenter streets in Springfield, and we should break ground this spring. The initial drawings are continually evolving, but it will be a front door for the School of Medicine. I want this building to be something that welcomes people so that by looking at it you will know that we care for you in the broadest possible sense; that we will give you hope. I want the structure, the institution and the people to reflect strength.

What is the concept behind the Cancer Institute?

We're not going to duplicate resources. I'm driven by a service motive that says together we can build something bigger and better than any one of us can do alone. Our partnership with St. John's Hospital, Memorial Medical Center and the very, very good community oncologists will allow us to hire people whose focus is narrower, more specialized and research-oriented.

One of the functions of a university is to create new knowledge. That's what the research arm of the university's

Cancer Institute will do.

Right now, we're working on refining the structure and hiring staff. And we've got the support of people like Rep. Ray LaHood (R-Peoria) and Rep. John Shimkus (R-Collinsville) who have helped us secure federal dollars to outfit the research labs.

What's on your wish list for the Cancer Institute?

I'd like the building to have another 20,000 square feet, which would cost about \$15 million. The advantage to making it bigger is that we could put basic science researchers side by side with clinicians to facilitate translational research; that is, getting the bedside-to-bench talk going back and forth.

One of your interests is children and cancer. How is the School of Medicine helping this effort?

We are strengthening our relationship with St. John's Hospital, thinking about the way we can grow pediatrics and children's health-care services. We are working to create a children's hospital within a hospital. The School has the outpatient services, and the hospital has the in-patient side. It's a time of building respect and understanding and agreeing that if we are going to grow, we have to have more physicians and

grow the services. I've worked more on getting the people: our new emphasis on children's services will have a half-dozen specialists including more neonatologists, pediatric cardiologist, pulmonologist and neurologists.

As Dr. Randy Kienstra (Chair, Department of Pediatrics) shifts his role, we are going to be looking for a new chairman / medical director — not just the next chair of pediatrics, but also a medical director for the children's hospital — it's a nuance, but an important one that signals the next phase of our growth.

When I was student, there were only four or five pediatrics faculty at SIU, and now we have about 20. We want 30 in the near future.

SIU School of Medicine is turning 35 this year. Are we growing at a good rate?

We're maturing. The metaphor I use to describe leading this institution is a glacier — you keep pushing, but it's difficult to see growth and change on a day-by-day basis.

We're like the young adult, in a way almost fully physically grown, now deciding what we want to be.

When Dr. Moy opened the school, education was priority number one — we had to have men and women coming out with white coats. Of course, patients had to be there — and most clinical training was done by local practitioners.

But as we've grown, our clinical faculty has grown, and the curriculum and requirements have changed, compelling us to grow in size and scope.

We need educators who can help us fulfill our certification requirements. We have to be less reliant on community physicians — we need them as role models — but we need to grow all specialties, not just those in private practice locally.

We're world-renowned, not just for our educational techniques, but for our research: for example, Dr. Pranzatelli's OMS research and Dr. Bartke's research



on aging. We are making advances in neuroscience, audiology, otolaryngology; we're getting numerous NIH grants; we have 172 physicians on staff; and we're getting second-generation SIU medical students ... the list goes on. It's an exciting time.

Where does research fit in with our mission to improve health care?

Medical school is the classic three-legged stool — we teach, we take care of patients, and as a university we also create new knowledge. To be a medical school without research is not to be a medical school at all. One-third of our students do some form of original research. It is incumbent upon us to do

research and contribute to the body of new medical knowledge. If not us, who?

But our mission is still to educate downstate students and send them back to southern and central Illinois. Our priorities are not changing, but they are expanding.

What's your 10-year plan?

If we look back and see that the health of the region — the health of the people we serve — has been improved because of what we've done, we will be successful. That's the accomplishment I look for and that's ultimately what we're working toward. ■