As I write this a Search Committee has been constituted. Chaired by Dean John Kelton, to select a replacement for me as Chair of the Department of Surgery. My term as Chair ends June 30, 2012 after a 13 year tenure. I am very pleased with the progress that we have made together during those 13 years and I feel that I am passing on to my successor a Department that is very healthy and vibrant. The Department has seen significant growth both in numbers of geographic full time surgeons, now 86, the number of postgraduate residency training programs that we offer, currently 11 and in peer-reviewed grant funding and overall research output. Our contribution and influence within the Faculty of Health Sciences has grown substantially.

Funding constraints within our medical care system will, in the next few years, impact significantly on hospital-based specialty groups and the Department of Surgery will certainly feel these constraints. While our absolute numbers may not grow at past rates there is no reason to believe that our academic contributions and output will not continue and may well exceed previous rates of growth. While we have made significant progress, none of this would have been possible without the help and support of many individuals. I am particularly grateful to Michelle McCool the Administrative Coordinator and Clare Mitchell, the Department Director, who have been in these roles for 13 years and have built a very effective organization structure. I would like to thank as well the Division Heads within the Department who have guided and significantly contributed to the growth of the Department. Lastly I would like to thank the Clinical Chiefs of Surgery of the two hospital corporations, currently Dr. Wes Stephen and Dr. Anthony Adili, whose support and cooperation are essential for the success of our academic programs and Department.

I know and trust that you will provide the newly selected Chair of the Department the same support and assistance that you have given me over the past 13 years.
Last November, the Faculty of Health Sciences Postgraduate Program had access to some infrastructure money from the government to support specialty expansion. Departments and Programs were encouraged to submit requests for funds to support central infrastructure. Our department submitted a request for a Lapsim system and for AV equipment for a meeting room. Our requests were approved by the Ministry in January. We partnered with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and ordered three Lapsim systems; one to be housed at the Juravinski Hospital & Cancer Centre (JHCC), one at the Niagara campus and the third one to be housed in the Centre for Simulation Based Learning (CSBL) at McMaster. The Lapsim is one of the first and most widely used virtual simulators for acquisition of two-handed laparoscopic skills. It is anticipated that modules for urology will be developed by Lapsim in the foreseeable future. If you are interested in the Lapsim system please contact Ms Katie Niblock niblock@mcmaster.ca.

The DeGroote MD Program has purchased on behalf of the Department of Surgery and Surgical Clerkship the Web Initiative for Surgical Education Modules (WISE-MD). This application was designed as part of the surgical clerkship at the NYU School of Medicine. This software attempts to provide a computerized linear narrative of the patient’s illness and the patient-physician interaction from the patient’s first visit with his or her physician, through the diagnostic process, into the operating room, through the laboratory studies and pathology, and finally to the postoperative visits. This educational program has been designed to enhance the teaching of common surgical problems to medical students. WISE-MD has been developed through a joint effort of New York University Medical Center, the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the Association of Surgical Education (ASE).
Dr. Thoma was born a Greek Cypriot but left Cyprus due to a raging deadly conflict there in 1964; coming to Canada to join his older brother who had immigrated to Hamilton earlier. Having completed High School, his first choice for university was McGill but due to the FLQ separatist crisis he stayed in Hamilton. He was accepted by McMaster University as a medical student and after completing the curriculum in 1976 he was accepted into the Core Surgery program, where he completed 2 years in General Surgery. At that time there were only 3 McMaster training programs: General Surgery, Orthopedic Surgery and Plastic Surgery. Dr. Thoma became the 3rd resident in the Plastic Surgery Training Program at the Hamilton General Hospital. The first resident had been John Cohen-Shohet from Iran and the second A. J. Puri, from Kenya. Later residents were Winston Crookedale (4th) from Barbados and Laurence Tang (5th) from Trinidad. The residents worked hard, with many on call long hours and they say much burn and trauma material, both pediatric and adult. Until 2000, the McMaster Plastic Surgery residents participated in seminars at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. After completion of Plastic Surgery training Dr. Thoma spent a year in Head and Neck Surgery followed by a McLoughlin Fellowship in hand and Microsurgery in Louisville Kentucky from 1982-1983.

Dr. Achilleas Thoma knows the history of the Division of Plastic Surgery at McMaster, having lived it. Before inception of the McMaster Plastic Surgery Program in 1976 there were several practicing plastic surgeons in Hamilton. They were Drs. O Mirehouse, R. Farmer, G. Born, B. Clark, H. Dinh, W. Sorokolit, S. Heddle, D. Truscott and A. Campbell-Moscrop. Although Plastic Surgery was practiced in all city hospitals, the main sites were the Hamilton General and St. Joseph’s Hospitals. After inception in 1976 there were 1 senior and 1 junior resident who were free to follow staff plastic surgeons into any of the 5 Hamilton Hospitals and Joseph Brant in Burlington. The Division Heads sequentially were Dr. Orville Mirehouse (Founding Division Head), Dr. A. Thoma, Dr. B. Clark and then again Dr. Thoma (current). The Program Directors in order were Dr. O. Mirehouse, Dr A. Thoma, Dr. J. Bain, Dr. A. Thoma and Dr. Strumas, (current).

In 1998 in the midst of a busy surgical practice, Dr. Thoma became concerned about the cost and efficacy of surgical interventions. He continued his practice but studied an additional 20 hours per week toward obtaining an MSc in Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics in 2002. This allowed him to conduct independent research culminating in over 110 articles. He feels has also augmented his surgical acumen.

In addition to his academic contributions at McMaster University Dr. Thoma has been President of the Eastern Great Lakes Head and Neck Association, President of the Canadian Microsurgical Society, President of the Educational Foundation of The Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons, Member of the Editorial Board of the Canadian Journal of Plastic Surgery, President of the Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons and Director of the McMaster Surgical Outcomes Center. Dr Thoma feels that his greatest contributions were editing The Clinics in Plastic Surgery - Evidence Based Plastic Surgery: Design measurement and evaluation and publication of analysis of cost effectiveness in the domain of breast reconstruction after mastectomy for cancer.

Evolution of the program included formation by Dr. Thoma of a dedicated Microsurgery Teaching Laboratory to teach residents microsurgical skills. The Plastic Surgery Residents are also taught Evidence-Based Surgical Principles. During this evolution microsurgical Head and Neck reconstructions were begun in Hamilton. McMaster University Medical Centre morphed from a Cottage Hospital into a specialized Pediatric Surgery Centre. At this time, all aspects of Plastic Surgery are performed in Hamilton. There are now more GFT Faculty than PT Faculty. All new surgeons are GFT. Numerous academic activities are mandated and carried out by all plastic surgeons and residents. Dr Thoma is proud of the evolution of Plastic Surgery at McMaster University.

Did we miss your news?

How to contact us

General News Items — Ms. Kathy Wilson
(kawilso@mcmaster.ca)

Alumni News — Dr. Robert Hansebout
(hansebou@mcmaster.ca)
**Research News**

**DREF (Orthopedic Research and Education Foundation) Dr. Michelle Ghert**
(co-investigator Dr. B. Deheshi) was awarded Prophylactic antibiotic regimen in tumor surgery (PARITY): A randomized multi-center clinical trial

**Juravinski Cancer Centre Foundation Research Grant Dr. Jehanathan Pintus**
GNRH antagonist as radiation sensitizers of prostate cancer xenograft: Pre clinical proof of principle

**CIHR Grant (Canadian Institutes of Health Research) Dr. Marko Simunovic**
(co-investigator Dr. S. Forbes) Evaluating quality improvement intervention in colorectal cancer surgery in Ontario

**Juravinski Cancer Centre Foundation Education Grant Dr. Marko Simunovic**
“New approaches to abdominoperineal resection in rectal cancer – anterior-entry and prone APR”

**Juravinski Cancer Centre Foundation Research Grant Dr. Marko Simunovic**
(co-investigators: Dr. S. Kelly and Dr. S. Forbes) “Two-step preoperative Multidisciplinary Clinic: Sub-study of the quality improvement in colorectal cancer in Local Health Integration Network 4 (LHIN4) (DICC-L4) project”

**CIHR Grant (Canadian Institutes of Health Research) Dr. Richard Whitlock**
(co-investigator Dr. M. Bhandari) Transcutaneous oximetry, transcutaneous carbon dioxide and supplemental oxygen therapy in lower limb amputations – An observational study

2012 CARMS Results

The Department is pleased to announce that all programs participating in CARMS for 2012 have successfully Matched—welcome to the following:

**General Surgery:**
- Yaameneh Chanda, Aristithes Doumouras, Filgen Fung, Kyle Hunt, Yoojung Lee, Jennifer Li, Miriam Tsao, and Tabitha Tse
- **General Surgery Niagara:**
  - Matthew Zulys
- **Neurosurgery:**
  - Dragos Catana
- **Ophthalmology:**
  - Brian Chan and Christopher McGaughlin

Congratulations Dr. Julo Omola, General Surgery Resident. Dr. Omola has been awarded a Paul Farmer International Surgery Fellowship

**Orthopedic Surgery:**
- Sebastian Heaven, Darren deSA, Gavvin Nieroopan, Vandin Sardana, Thomas Wood, and Marco Yeung

**Otolaryngology:**
- Mishe Moirri and, Jay Wong

**Plastic Surgery:**
- Noor Alolabi, Serge Goekjian, and Lauren Willoughby

**Urology:**
- Shawn Dason, Soojin Kim and, Chris Wu

**Vascular Surgery:**
- Mina Guirguis

**Residents Corner**

**Orthopedic Surgery Graduating Residents’ Academic Day**
April 13th, 2012

**Urology Residents’ Research Day**
April 20th, 2012

**Surgical Foundations PGY-2 Research Morning**
May 16th, 2012

**Department of Oncology’s Student Research Day**
June 21st, 2012

(abstracts due April 11th, 2012)

**CIHR Studentships**

**CIHR Health Professional Student Research Award**

Stephanie Chan – Exploring student factors surrounding pre-clerkship surgical education interventions
Supervisor: Dr. Deepak Dath

**CIHR Undergraduate Studentship Awards:**
- Mobility, Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis
- Herman Young – Systematic Review on the Risk of Fracture Metastatic bone disease in long bones and indications for surgery
Supervisors: Dr. Ben Deheshi and Dr. Michelle Ghert

Rukia Swalla – TRUST: Trial to evaluate ultrasound in the treatment of tibial fractures
Supervisor: Dr. Mohit Bhandari

Sarah Crouch – Arthroscopic treatment or femorocacetabular impingement: A pilot randomized controlled trial
Supervisor: Dr. Ofem Ayeni

**CMAS Upcoming Courses**

- May 11 & 12, 2012 – Advanced Laparoscopic Urology Course
- May 25 & 26, 2012 – Laparoscopic Skills for Perioperative Nurses
- June 8 & 9, 2012 – Obesity in Canada – Prevention and Treatment
- May 25 & 26, 2012 – Laparoscopic Skills for Perioperative Nurses


June 7–8, 2012 – 12th Annual Canadian GI/GERD Update Conference – Deerhurst Resort – Registration only $100