

Patan Academy of the Health Sciences (PAHS) Kathmandu Nepal Project Summary

The Republic of Nepal and its people have endured more than their share of tragedy over the last three decades. A decade-long civil war was, in part, a result of the disparity of the health status between those living in urban and rural areas. The reality of the health care disparity between urban and rural Nepal is abundantly clear: a two-decade difference in life expectancy (the life expectancy is 37 years in some remote regions) and a thirty-three fold difference in physicians per capita. While health professional availability is only one part of the disparity, it is a critical one.



Young patient preparing for 4 hour walk to airstrip for transport to hospital in Kathmandu

But the Nepali people have shown a remarkable resilience and have undertaken innovative political, social, educational and health-related endeavors that serve as beacons of hope to other beleaguered nations. One such homegrown initiative is the **Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS)**. This new, national health sciences university, designed from the ground up on the principles of *social accountability*, has recently admitted its first cohort of medical students who recited the following oath:

“I pledge that I will at all times act with compassion and respect towards patients and their families, regardless of their caste, religion, socio-economic status, age or handicap. I am committed serving the disadvantaged, particularly those in remote rural areas of Nepal.”



PAHS pioneer class recites the PAHS oath (June 2010).

Three UBC faculty members have been part of a multi University International Advisory Board supporting the development and implementation of PAHS. Their roles have included:

Dr. Courneya:

- extensive curriculum and faculty development (2000 to present)

Dr. Woollard:

- writing a feasibility study to launch the planning for PAHS and subsequently working on its development, policies, partnership support and establishment

Dr. Gair:

- Faculty development (2008 to present)

In 2011 Drs. Courneya and Gair will be in Nepal for 5 weeks to direct the Principles of Human Biology (Gair March/April) and Cardiovascular (Courneya June/July) Blocks along with their Nepali PAHS faculty partners.

Potential Roles at PAHS for UBC Medical and Health Sciences Students:

- 1) **Basic Science Tutors.** Since 2/3 of the PAHS class is selected from rural backgrounds there is a wide range of exposure to prior science training. UBC pre-medical, medical or health science students with an enthusiasm for and aptitude at **one on one or small group tutoring** could become science and/or English tutors for the rural medical students. This could be a short term (2-3 weeks) or long term (1-3 months) commitment.
- 2) **PBL Case Writing:** senior medical students who have experienced at least two years of PBL could contribute to ongoing **PBL case and tutor guide development** for the PAHS curriculum. This could be a short term (1-2 weeks) or long term (1-2 months) commitment.
- 3) Clinical Elective at Patan Academy (the teaching hospital for PAHS). This would be a 1-3 month commitment) and would include opportunities for

senior (4th year) medical students to experience clinical cases both at Patan Hospital (in Kathmandu) and (if conditions permitted) district hospitals.

4) **Fundraising in Canada** on behalf of PAHS to support:

- medical student tuition for rural students with limited means to attend PAHS.
- Textbooks purchase for the PAHS library

For more information contact:

Dr. Carol-Ann Courneya (VFMP)



cacourneya@gmail.com

Dr. Robert Woollard (VFMP)



woollard@familymed.ubc.ca

Dr. Jane Gair (IMP)



jgair@uvic.ca