



## *Perspective/Opinion*

# **From Faculty to Family - Thoughts on MCW-Central Wisconsin from a Milwaukee Faculty Transplant**

By Roy M. Long, PhD

*Dr. Long, who has taught at both MCW-Milwaukee and MCW-Central Wisconsin, shares what he has learned about the family atmosphere and the advantages of working in Wausau ...*

Family. At MCW, we often talk and hear about welcoming students, faculty, and staff into the “MCW family.” However, one important influence MCW-Central Wisconsin (CW) has had upon me is a greater dimension of family – one in which the parents and students at MCW-CW have welcomed me into their families.

One such example occurred at the inaugural Central Wisconsin White Coat Ceremony. Prior to the ceremony, I had the opportunity to interact with parents and discuss the medical school journey that their child was going to experience. After this discussion, I had a parent approach me and say they felt much more comfortable with their daughter’s decision to enroll at MCW-CW, since I would be “looking out” for their daughter. I graciously thanked the parent for their trust, but also realized the expectations that the parent had just placed on me. That experience in and of itself stirred emotions that I had not previously experienced as an educator. The profound depth of this experience was amplified when, three years later, the same parent approached me following graduation ceremonies and thanked me for taking care of their daughter during medical school.

It has been moments like these, and many others, that have reinforced the extended family experience the MCW-CW parent and student have added to my identity as an educator.

During my time at MCW-CW campus, I have also experienced the medical student journey to a greater degree than previously. In a way, I have become a part of the MCW-CW student family and, in so doing, I have become much more empathetic to the journey of medical students on their path to becoming physicians. Within the MCW-CW educational suite, the administrative, teaching, and student study spaces are in close proximity. As such, the MCW-CW faculty and staff are provided an intimate view into the educational demands that are placed onto medical

students. By no means do I wish to imply that medical students at MCW-Milwaukee do not experience the same journey. From my experience the size and scope of MCW-Milwaukee somewhat insulates the everyday medical student activities and experience from the faculty and staff. From my current unique vantage point, I have adjusted my medical education philosophy to balance medical education expectations with required wellness activities.

MCW-Central Wisconsin has also contributed to the increasing the national/international visibility of the MCW Medical School – as an institution, we are part of a larger educational family. In 2012, MCW announced a plan to open regional campuses that would offer an accelerated three-year curriculum. These plans thrust MCW into the national spotlight and led to an invitation to join the Consortium of Accelerated Medical Pathway Programs (CAMPP) as a founding member institution.

Besides contributing to increased visibility, MCW-CW has led the institution to consider alternative educational methods and experiences. MCW-Milwaukee and MCW-Green Bay students participate in block clerkships, whereas MCW-CW students perform Longitudinal Integrated Clerkships (LIC) which allow students to experience all clerkship specialties concurrently. The success of the success of the three-year curriculum and the Central Wisconsin-LIC has led to healthy discussions in the curriculum innovation project about the possibility of offering a three-year curriculum and a form of an LIC in Milwaukee. MCW-CW provides an outstanding environment to explore innovative medical education teaching methods which we share across the institution and with our educational partners across the country.

The MCW family atmosphere also extend to the surrounding Central Wisconsin communities. MCW-CW actively seeks community leaders to participate in the admissions process.

Shortly, our first graduating cohort will be finishing residency and, we hope, some will be returning to practice in the area. As such, there is the real possibility that a community member, a member of their family, or a friend could receive care from a physician that the community member played a key role in their physician's matriculation to MCW-CW. Through the Aspirus Scholars Program, seventeen students from six cohorts have already committed to practicing in CW following completion of their residency. The faculty and staff are eagerly awaiting to hear where these and all CW graduates as they establish their medical practices. The ultimate impact of MCW-CW will be measured by our students practicing in the communities of Central Wisconsin or other underserved areas.

*Roy M. Long, PhD, is the Assistant Dean for Basic Sciences at MCW-CW and is an Associate Professor of Microbiology and Immunology. He is a member of the MCW Society of Teaching Scholars.*