

D.O.C.S. CLUB

Discovering Opportunities and Careers for Students in Medicine

FALL 2009 MENTOR PHYSICIAN SESSION SUMMARY



D.O.C.S. members met with Dr. John Luce & Dr. Judith Luce, UCSF Medical School professors and leading physicians practicing at San Francisco General Hospital. Members also enjoyed an extensive tour of this world renown public health hospital.

L to R: John Tidwell, Lindsey Wright, Samantha Hasler, Dwight Coddington, Dr. Judith Luce, Dr. John Luce

JOHN LUCE, MD

UCSF Professor Emeritus and Anesthesia, San Francisco General Hospital, Former Chief of Medical Officer at SF General

JUDITH LUCE, MD

UCSF Clinical Professor of Medicine, San Francisco General Hospital

This fall D.O.C.S. members met with two leading physicians from UCSF who shared their stories on what it is like to work in a busy public health hospital treating patients, conducting research and serving as professors in the UCSF Medical School.

Each physician followed a very different route that led to practicing medicine. Dr. John Luce majored in Literature at Stanford and had a successful career as a political press secretary and magazine writer and editor before becoming a physician. It was interesting to discover that he explored other options prior to medicine, yet when he made up his mind that he wanted go to medical school it was not too late switch gears and pursue his passion. He was a resident and a fellow in Internal Medicine, and also a fellow in Respiratory Diseases and a Pew fellow in Health Policy. Dr. Luce specializes in Critical

Care Medicine, Pulmonary and Internal Medicine and conducts clinical research in quality improvement of health policy, biomedical ethics and end-of-life care, and acute lung injury and the acute respiratory distress.

Dr. Judith Luce was always fascinated with science and conducts oncology research in addition to teaching med students and treating patients. A specialist in cancer and blood diseases, Dr. Luce has a fellowship in Hematology and specializes in Internal medicine, Hematology, and Oncology. Her work involves operating a special clinic for cancer patients, treating hospitalized patients, and supervising fellows in her field and medical residents in Internal Medicine. She also conducts research including Clinical Trials to compare the efficacy of drugs.

Both physicians emphasized that having a well-rounded educational background is a plus when it comes to attending medical school and practicing medicine in real life. Although we are all interested in the sciences, we were excited to hear that we don't have to take just Biology classes in college but can explore art, writing, music and other interests that we may have. According to the doctors, medical school admissions officers appreciate students who have a wide range of interests and experiences. As UCSF professors, it was also enlightening to discover from them that medical school today is much more "hands-on" than lecture-oriented, which used to be the case. This fact allows for more patient interaction in the early stages of med school and makes it seem more interesting and beneficial for practical learning.

We learned that San Francisco General Hospital provides leading-edge medicine and is rated as a **“Level 1 Trauma Hospital”** – meaning that there are physicians available on-site 24/7. Not all hospitals are rated as such which means they may have to call in physicians in an emergency situation. When there is a traumatic accident, for example, it is not unusual for patients to be transported, even air-lifted, to SF General for emergency treatment—particularly when numerous patients are involved, such as freeway accident, or a natural catastrophe like an earthquake. Another thing that we learned from these doctors is that it is especially challenging to communicate with patients from different cultures who speak a variety of foreign languages, a given at a busy urban public health hospital like San Francisco General.

Budget concerns are always an issue in a public hospital yet we were encouraged to learn about grant funding that enabled UCSF to build a state-of-the-art ACE Unit (Acute Care for Elders) which is an environment that is designed to be more "homelike" and suitable for older patients. This model program treats those with dementia, along with other patients, and is designed to promote functionality of hospitalized older patients. The ACE Unit features matte flooring instead of linoleum, warmly colored walls and furnishings and fosters elder mobility by serving meals in a sunny room with view instead of in their beds which helps promote the healing process. The doctors also provided an extensive tour of SF General including the intensive care unit where a patient was quarantined with the H1N1 virus. The doctors were excited to hear about our club and encouraged us to pursue a rewarding life in medicine and to investigate and participate in many exciting research opportunities. Special thanks go to Dr. John Luce and Dr. Judith Luce for taking the time out of their busy schedules to meet with our group! It was a privilege for the D.O.C.S. members to learn about what it is likely to practice in a world renowned hospital right here in the Bay Area.