

The MD/MBA Program: Learning the Business of Medicine

By Nancy West

A growing number of physicians are pursuing medical careers that include health policy, hospital/medical practice administration and entrepreneurial pursuits. Students are finding that Drexel's MD/MBA degree program, offered jointly by the College of Medicine and LeBow College of Business, provides them with the business principles and savvy needed to fulfill these career goals.

Drexel MD/MBA candidate Anand Parikh was attracted to the dual degree program because the MBA offered an entrepreneurship and innovation management track. During his year of business study, Parikh, who plans to specialize in vascular surgery, completed an internship with a medical device company. In the future, he hopes to collaborate with medical device companies to develop new products or start his own entrepreneurial enterprise.

"The MBA program enhanced my analytical and critical thinking skills, which are important to identify deficits in medicine and develop solutions to drive advances," says Parikh.

Drexel MD/MBA candidate Ishita Dalal believes the dual degree provides an "extra edge for doctors because business in health care has become such an important issue."

"This program opened my mind to another way of thinking," says Dalal, who plans to specialize in internal medicine and has an interest in health care administration. "It taught me how to work with people effectively and how the world works outside the fields of science and medicine."

Ashley Landicho, an MD/MBA candidate with a passion for health policy and research related to childhood obesity, says the program gave her the opportunity to expand her network beyond the medical field to include people from all over the world working in very diverse fields.

During her MBA studies, Landicho initiated a highly successful student-run interdisciplinary seminar series, *Recharting the Borders*, that brought together experts from the health care and corporate sectors to discuss the health care industry.

Landicho says the MBA program greatly enhanced her understanding of statistics and guidelines. "It altered the way I look at the primary literature and how it should be incorporated into practice," she observed.

Landicho is one of only two students nationwide to be chosen for an internship this fall with the American Academy of Pediatrics Department of Federal Affairs. She will meet with congressional leaders

and community groups to conduct research on federal health care policy. "My dual degree will help me understand pediatric conditions not only on the molecular level, but also on a government policy level," she says.

Richard Tsai, MD/MBA '09, is currently a neurology fellow at the University of California, San Francisco, where he has an interest in clinical trials related to aging and neurodegenerative diseases. "Eventually I hope to build my own research team to conduct clinical trials," Tsai notes. "The dual degree program helped me understand how industry thinks in terms of business and product development," Tsai notes. "We had a very diverse group of students with business and non-business backgrounds, and we benefited from team learning."

Nikhil Jain, MD/MBA '10, decided to pursue the dual degree after he was elected to serve as president of the Student Government Association at the College. "It was my first major leadership role, and the experience unleashed a great desire to make management part of my career," he explains.

Now chief resident in radiology at Winthrop-University Hospital in New York, Jain says, "The program really helped me to become a leader. I've been asked to serve on both department and hospital-wide committees. During my residency, I've helped institute some massive changes to the residency program and structure. I also helped the program directors start a lecture series called *Radiology as Business*.

"The MBA program led me to understand that radiology and all of medicine is a business and patients are our customers," he observes. "In order to succeed, you must be the best in your respective craft but also strive to be service builders, cultivating and fostering relationships with other physicians and departments, as well as our patients."

