The Big Green can now lay claim to a Dean Green

From research scientist to department chair to dean of Dartmouth Medical School: William Green, Ph.D., chair of microbiology and immunology at DMS since 2002, was tapped in January as dean of the Medical School. He succeeds Stephen Spielberg, M.D., Ph.D., who stepped down to focus on international health initiatives and his research on children’s therapeutic advances. Spielberg, who was DMS’s dean for four years, has been appointed by the non-profit Institute for Pediatric Innovation, Inc., to lead a program focused on tailoring existing pharmaceutical products to meet children’s needs.

Right: Green decided to take on the deanship because “it just felt like the right thing to do,” he says. “Having been a department chair for five and a half years gave me some preparation.”

Building on that foundation, he’s begun meeting with key DMS, DHMC, VA, and Dartmouth College officials and is quickly learning to navigate a complex matrix—the intersection of the Medical School, Medical Center, and College.

He’s poised to capitalize on DMS’s “unique strengths”—which he considers to include being a “right-sized” institution, where researchers and physicians can easily collaborate with each other to “go from basic science laboratory discoveries through translational research to clinical trials.” He also counts among the institution’s strengths the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice—formerly the Center for the Evaluative Clinical Sciences—and its research on medical outcomes, resource allocation, and healthcare decision-making.

Size: “I think we have a lot of … unrecognized classic strengths, despite our size,” Green says. “We need to get the message out [that] this place up in the north woods really competes head-to-head with all the big places that many of us have trained at.”

Green trained at some pretty big places himself. After graduating from the University of Michigan, he earned his Ph.D. at Case Western Reserve and did postdoctoral work at Johns Hopkins and then the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and University of Washington in Seattle. He joined the faculty at Fred Hutchinson in 1979 and moved to Dartmouth in 1983.

Immune: He was the director of DMS’s Immunology Program from 1992 to 2002 and then took over as chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. While he’s dean, he plans to continue his research—looking at immune responses to retroviral diseases, including leukemia and immunodeficiency, and developing new approaches for a better smallpox vaccine.

In fact, Green is one of only four medical school deans—out of 129 in the U.S.—who are not M.D.’s, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. Two of the other three also have Ph.D.’s—those at the Uni-
as dean is not a renewable one. While he is serving, there will be an organizational review of the Medical School, as well as a search for the next dean.

Dartmouth College Executive Vice President Adam Keller, former chief operating officer of DMS, has been appointed vice president of health affairs for the period of Green’s dean-ship, to advise Green and to help with fund-raising and public relations. Green also plans to appoint a senior associate dean for clinical affairs to advise him in that arena.

**Missions:** “We have a lot of missions here,” Green points out. “We teach. We do research. We do other forms of scholarship.” But at the same time, he says, “I think a lot of the job is good communications, [and] getting people to interact well.”

Laura Stephenson Carter

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**Wennberg’s Book Value**

Here’s a riddle (though the subject is too serious to be funny): When is a book about health care not a health-care book? When it’s an economics book. *Overtreated: Why Too Much Medicine Is Making Us Sicker and Poorer* was deemed the best economics book of 2007 by the New York Times. It was ranked ahead of Alan Greenspan’s best-selling memoir in “another very good year for economics books.”

And here’s another riddle: What makes the foregoing relevant to the readers of Dartmouth Medicine? Overtreated—by Shannon Brownlee, who has written for such publications as Atlantic Monthly and the New York Times Magazine—draws heavily on the work of Dartmouth’s Dr. John Wennberg (featured on the cover of DMS’s Winter 2007 issue) and his colleagues. In fact, the first sentence of chapter one begins: “John E. Wennberg is one of the heroes of modern medicine.”

Brownlee’s “bombshell of a book [is] must reading,” said Kirkus Reviews. The book’s essence won’t be news to this magazine’s readers, but its scope and detail are enlightening, and its story-telling style makes it accessible to the average patient, not just to health-care administrators. Or economists. D.C.G.

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**Battle Against Brutality**

When he was six years old, Yinong Young-Xu, Sc.D., stood on a Shanghai street as thousands of bystanders laughed and cheered at trucks filled with political dissidents on their way to be executed. “It was like a traditional Chinese New Year’s celebration—except the city was celebrating its own brutality,” Young-Xu recalled in a commentary titled “A Potential for Brutality” on public radio’s This I Believe. For Young-Xu, who researches post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at the DMS-affiliated VA National Center for PTSD, witnessing such violence “was just hard,” he says. “Somehow, your instinct to survive in that society, to fit in, is . . . to be brutal. . . People just turned in their relatives, as long as they could save their own skin.”

“I believe brutality is a disease, just like cancer,” he said in his commentary (to hear it, go to npr.org and put his name in the search field). “Every one of us is at risk, including me.” He won’t forget that day in Shanghai. “I hope those brave young men who perished . . . find some solace in the fact that a bystander, a relatively innocent child, did not forget them.” M.C.W.