

Endowed chairs and professorships: A hallmark of great medical schools

By Gary Snyder

Raymond Sobel, M.D., retired from Dartmouth's Department of Psychiatry in 1977, but 25 years later he played an important role in recruiting a new chair to the Department.

In 2002, Alan Green, M.D., was the director of a major research center at Harvard when Dartmouth came calling. "The opportunity that was offered to me was to be chair of the Department of Psychiatry at Dartmouth," Green says. "I was intrigued because I thought I could build a great department, and that Dartmouth would be a place where my research could flourish."

An additional factor was the fact that Green would assume the Raymond Sobel Professorship of Psychiatry, which was created in 1982 to honor Sobel's contributions to the Medical School and the field of psychiatry. "As I began to get serious about the possibility, learning that the chair position would be linked to an endowed chair made the offer that much sweeter," Green says.

Endowed chairs and professorships offer faculty a number of benefits, including protected time to focus on research rather than clinical work. "It is through such protected time that ideas are generated, grants are written, and research studies are done," Green says.

Another attraction was simply the honor attached to the chair, including the connection to Sobel's contributions to psychiatry. "I have met Raymond Sobel, and I am proud to use the title," Green says. "He was a distinguished child psychiatrist. Sitting in a chair named after him is meaningful to me. And having a named chair title seems to mean a lot to others when I travel—a matter of increased distinction, not just for me, but also for Dartmouth and the Medical School."

The ability of the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth to achieve its goals—such as attracting renowned physicians and scientists, raising its global identity, and leading innovation in medical education—will depend in part on increasing the number of endowed chairs and professorships. Considered one of the hallmarks of great universities and schools, endowed chairs and professorships serve as a powerful recruitment tool in the battle for top talent—and allow the named chair or professor to pursue their research and education passions, ultimately benefitting students and society. An endowed chair or professorship recognizes superior faculty, both new and existing, while providing long-term financial support for sustaining excellence in their work.

"When trying to recruit highly accomplished physician-scientists, an important component of a recruitment package is protected time to do research," Green says. "Thus, recruiting an accom-

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plished physician-scientist will be made much more likely if it is linked to an endowed chair." And, he adds, "bestowing an endowed chair on a professor already here at Dartmouth is one of the key ingredients for retention of our best faculty."

Accelerating the creation of endowed chairs and professorships is a core goal of the Geisel 2020 strategic plan.

"Creating named chairs and professorships is a central priority for our medical school," says Mark Notestine, Ph.D., the associate dean for advancement at Geisel. "These endowments allow us to recruit and retain the brightest and most outstanding physicians and scientists, the leaders who are shaping the future of medicine. The support of our alumni and friends in creating these endowments is vital to our future success."



Alan Green, M.D., is the Raymond Sobel Professor and Chair of Psychiatry.