

## Story Summary

Jefferson has pioneered two new leadership development co-curricular initiatives to **help medical students navigate their career trajectories** and gain insight with which to lead and shape the future of healthcare.

**The Student Leadership Forum**, founded in 2012 by SKMC Dean Mark Tykocinski, MD, comprises a diverse, select group of students he personally mentors in order to cultivate their leadership capabilities.



# CULTIVATING MEDICINE'S FUTURE LEADERS

**A** medical malpractice litigator sparred with a defense attorney in front of a packed room of Sidney Kimmel Medical College students last November. Their key takeaway: As a doctor, these are the main things you need to know and do to avoid getting sued.

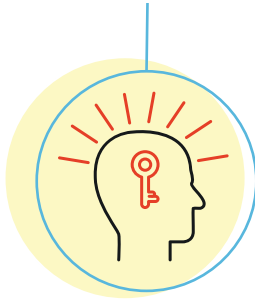
Insights like these are an example of topics covered in Jefferson's student-led Physician Executive Leadership curriculum—one of two new co-curricular programs pioneered at Jefferson to help medical students cultivate their leadership potential. On an individualized and campuswide scale, both initiatives promise to help Jefferson graduates lead and improve healthcare delivery in their future careers.

BY JESSICA STEIN DIAMOND

**The Physician Executive Leadership curriculum**, founded by and for students in 2013, offers all SKMC students access to non-mandatory education on non-clinical drivers of healthcare. This 'mini-MBA' focuses on issues, changes and leadership challenges today's medical students will face in their future careers.



Student Niko Kurtzman is active with both SLF and PEL.  
*Photo by Roger Barone.*



SLF members listen to a presentation by SKMC Dean Mark Tykocinski, MD. Photo by Roger Barone.



“What it will mean to be a physician in the decades ahead will be radically different from what it means today. We want to create the medical leaders of tomorrow,” says Mark Tykocinski, MD, the Anthony F. and Gertrude M. DePalma Dean of SKMC. “We want to prepare them to navigate changes affecting healthcare that may be even more disruptive than how Uber, Airbnb and Amazon are each transforming the taxi industry, and the hotel and retail sectors.”

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corrects mistakes. This is a unique opportunity to learn about the inner workings of a huge educational institution.”

Of the more than 50 highly qualified students who typically apply to SLF during their second year at Jefferson, 18 are selected via a rigorous process that emphasizes diversity. SLF’s current cohort includes a professional ballerina, an activist for women’s health and the LGBT community, a professional actor and a firefighter. Students remain in the program through graduation and benefit from six mentoring sessions and events each academic year that strengthen communication and leadership skills.

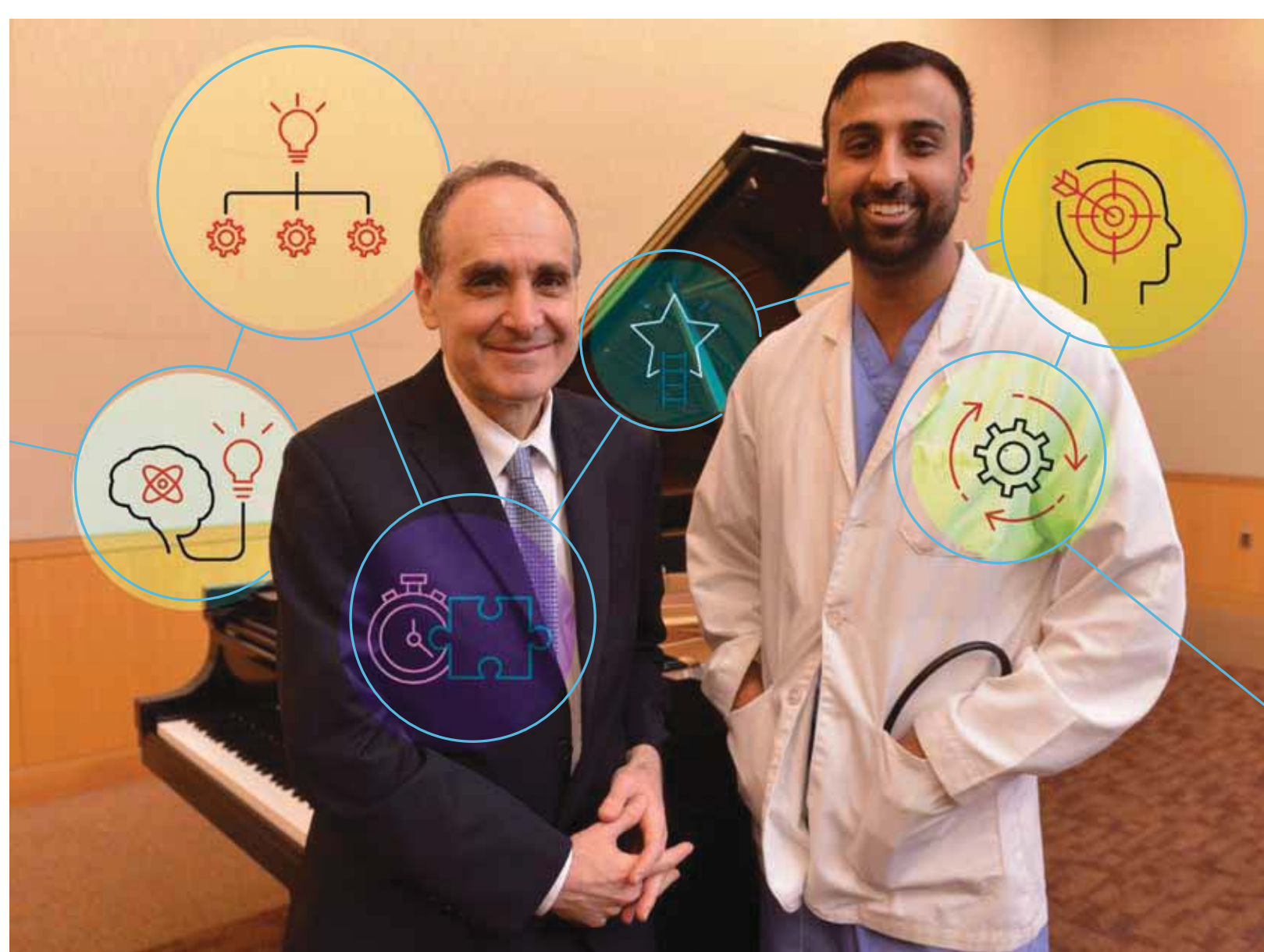
Recent graduate Arielle Spellun appreciates how SLF has expanded her perspective: “This has been a great way to connect with students with different interests in medicine who are dedicated to maintaining leadership roles and being involved in the process of change and leadership in medicine.” During her first year at Jefferson, Spellun established a deafness awareness lecture now integrated into the curriculum, building on her experience at the University of Pennsylvania, where she helped start the Ivy League’s first American Sign Language and deaf studies minor. Spellun hopes to specialize in primary care pediatrics for children with complex diagnoses and reduced hearing and is interested in future leadership roles in medical education and healthcare advocacy.

For Nicholas (“Niko”) Kurtzman, fourth-year student, “SLF has given me a different perspective on the politics within medicine and enabled me to hone in on what I’m looking for regarding career paths and what I need to do to get to where I want to be.” Prior to medical school, Kurtzman worked at a consulting firm and at a laboratory at the

## RIPPLE EFFECTS

Tykocinski founded the Student Leadership Forum (SLF) in 2012 to mentor a diverse group of proven student leaders and prepare them for future leadership roles in medicine. While SLF comprises a core group selected through a rigorous process, the program has had a ripple effect. In 2013, the Physician Executive Leadership (PEL) program was formed as an open-access program for all SKMC students interested in the business of medicine and nonclinical forces affecting healthcare. Created by Anuj Shah, now a fourth-year student, with guidance from Susan Rosenthal, MD, associate dean for student affairs and career counseling, PEL’s offerings have expanded each successive year and now include diverse learning opportunities that attract growing numbers of interested students on campus.

“SLF is one of the best learning experiences I’ve had in medical school,” says Shah, who came to Jefferson after working for two years as a healthcare consultant for the firm Oliver Wyman. “Dr. Tykocinski is an incredible mentor who teaches us in a way that empowers us, who shares key pieces of wisdom we can relate to and who isn’t shy about showing us how he learns from and



Anuj Shah with Richard Kogan, MD, clinical professor of psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical Center and a renowned concert pianist, who spoke to SLF members after performing at Jefferson in March. *Photo by Robert Neroni.*

University of Pennsylvania that launched a diagnostics company, CytoVas, LLC. He plans to pursue a career in emergency medicine as a way to maintain flexibility so he can continue working on start-ups.

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## RARE INSIGHT

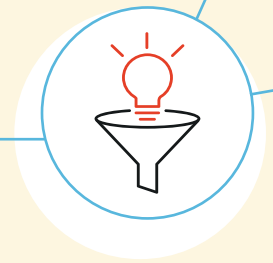
"Students are getting the benefit of Dr. Tykocinski's distilled wisdom from his 30-plus years in academic medicine and leadership," says Rosenthal, who provides administrative support to SLF. "This is a unique and very valuable opportunity. We hope that the insights students gain will help speed them on their way to becoming leaders in healthcare."

Rosenthal also served as a matchmaker of sorts: She introduced Shah toward the end of his first year at Jefferson in 2013 to alumnus

Greg Snyder, MD '15, who wanted to work on a leadership-related project during his rehabilitation from a spinal cord injury (see sidebar). Together, they expanded the PEL curriculum to help students understand how the healthcare system works and how they can fit into it and potentially change it for the better.

"I wanted to create a quick MBA almost, but make it very focused on topics relevant to future physicians," says Shah. "We identified the interest and made it for ourselves. Attendance at our events is voluntary, not mandatory. This is something we're passionate about, which is why it works." Now in its third year, PEL has a student advisory board of 18 students. As many as 150 students attend PEL lectures by leaders in healthcare and innovation; health insurance, health system and hospital chief executives and chief information officers; and technology entrepreneurs. Topics covered include trends in healthcare reimbursement, healthcare entrepreneurship, genomics-based medicine, technology innovation, global health, the patient experience and Medicaid, Medicare and the Affordable Care Act.

## Life Lessons in Leadership



**Greg Snyder's life changed forever one summer day in 2013**—along with his perspective on physicians' leadership training needs.

On a June afternoon during his family medicine rotation, Snyder, MD '15, and his dog Riley went hiking near a quarry. He woke up two weeks later in the ICU, unable to recall what happened before he fell 10 to 40 feet, suffered a traumatic brain injury and severed his spinal cord 95 percent of the way through, leaving him a T9 paraplegic.

"In the aftermath of that experience, I realized that doctors need to elevate the level of discourse about leadership training in our field," says Snyder. After three months at Magee Rehabilitation Hospital, Snyder worked on his recovery during the 2013-2014 academic year and helped develop Jefferson's student-driven Physician Executive Leadership curriculum (PEL) on key topics for future success not covered in traditional medical education.

"I don't want new doctors to be practicing in a healthcare system that is broken but that they don't understand enough to help fix," says Snyder, who also received high-level mentoring through the Student Leadership Forum. "When doctors begin working in this complex medical care system, we do what we know. We do medicine and only medicine. Not many doctors will venture out to do other things within healthcare to change it for the better."

"Medical schools focus on building clinical acumen. Why should we also expect doctors to learn how to potentially improve delivery of care? My answer is that patients will trust us more if we understand how their healthcare comes about," says Snyder, who pursued his leadership interests during a fourth-year PEL experience shadowing Jefferson president and CEO Stephen Klasko, MD, MBA.

Today, as an internal medicine resident at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Snyder views emotional intelligence as an essential skill in which doctors should be explicitly trained during medical school and residency. "Doctors are no longer autonomous. We're expected to manage emotional situations revolving around patients, and to serve as leaders on integrated care teams. During times of uncertainty, patients want to use our knowledge and empathy as a sounding board and anchor."



Last fall, Greg Snyder, MD '15, traveled to Wilmington, Del., to deliver a TEDx talk on the future of leadership for medical students and physicians.  
*Photo by Joe del Tufo.*



SLF member Mary ("Bit") Smith asks a question during an event. Photo by David Lunt.

it on a short cycle. The trajectory for PEL is growing exponentially as we get more enthusiastic students joining who bring more ideas."

Additional PEL offerings include an online journal written by and for students, *The Diagnostic*, as well as luncheon workshops, job shadowing and summer internships to connect interested students with innovators in medicine. Tykocinski also hopes to inspire regional alumni groups to essentially "adopt" participants when they return home for breaks by offering guidance, mentoring and leadership opportunities near home.

PEL's student-led approach to learning promises to reach broader audiences in the future via potential expansion to other medical school campuses and an online learning platform in development. Shah and three other PEL board members presented a poster on PEL's impact at the 2015 American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) conference. They will also submit their research on PEL and other medical student leadership programs for publication in a peer-reviewed journal to share the PEL model with other medical schools.

"The poster presentation at AAMC was incredibly well received and provocative to other medical schools because they would love to replicate this," says Charles Pohl, MD '87, senior associate dean for student affairs. "Jefferson students have built a rich and impactful program in just a few short years. That this is student-driven and student-led is remarkable."

Another way PEL might reach new audiences is through an online platform being developed by Kurtzman, Shah, Rosen and Snyder that was a winning entry in Jefferson's first annual Jefferson Accelerator Zone (JAZ) Tank Start-up Challenge in 2015. Their successful pitch: an online multimedia course platform (working title: "MedX") to teach other medical students about nonclinical drivers of care delivery that draws upon concepts shared through PEL. After they refine this pilot application, they hope to raise a round of seed funding. "PEL really broadens everyone's network and horizons. We've attracted the most engaged students, and we have become incredibly active in growing the PEL brand at Jefferson and beyond," Kurtzman says.

As faculty mentor, Rosen was asked in early 2016 to help PEL's leadership identify external support for speakers, internships and job shadow experiences. He arranged a meeting with Jefferson's development office that he hopes will bear fruit. "They have big dreams and could use some outside funding," Rosen says. "It all starts with the students' ideas and their hopes for the future. I can't think of a better thing to fund than teaching medical students how to be innovators in the future of healthcare delivery." 🐦

For more information about PEL: [www.physicianexecutiveleadership.com](http://www.physicianexecutiveleadership.com)

## EVERY STUDENT NEEDS THIS

"Every medical student who graduates now needs information about the larger forces and issues in healthcare," says Rosenthal, a professor of pediatric gastroenterology whose career in academic medicine included a stint as the designated institutional officer responsible for all residency programs at a large hospital corporation in New Jersey. "Most doctors will be employed by hospitals or large group practices, or will work in hospital administration or the healthcare industry. These are large, complex institutions. An understanding of their structure, finances and politics is imperative for career advancement."

Paul Rosen, MD, MPH, MMM, clinical director of service and operational excellence for Nemours Children's Health System and PEL faculty mentor, says, "You really need these skills to manage the hierarchy, manage people, work on a team, read a contract and all this stuff that no one really gets through their healthcare training. The purpose of PEL is to close that gap."

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## REVERSE MENTORING

Rosen describes his interactions with PEL as "a reverse mentoring relationship: They tell me what they want to do, and I try to support them while they teach me what's happening on the cutting edge of technology. It's a thrill ride to watch the students develop this thing. Students really like having the freedom to come up with ideas, make a plan and execute