Sanofi-aventis sponsors new Department of Nutrition scholarship program

Pharmaceutical company sanofi-aventis is sponsoring a new Department of Nutrition scholarship program that will help bring top international doctoral students to UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.

Through the sanofi-aventis—UNC Global Nutrition Scholars Program, the company will fund half the cost of a five-year doctoral program for three international students, or about $410,000. The company’s sponsorship will be matched with funds from the UNC Graduate School, the Department of Nutrition and faculty funding sources.

“We’re trying to think more globally in our research and nutrition programming,” said June Stevens, PhD, department chair. “This is a great step forward in accomplishing that goal.”

Stevens says that the economic downturn has meant many qualified and enthusiastic international students have not been able to attend UNC. The scholarship will make that opportunity possible and will prepare more students to address nutrition and other health challenges around the world.

The first Scholars will arrive at UNC in fall 2010. After their first year of study, they will have the unique opportunity to develop skills and broaden their understanding of the global pharmaceutical industry through an internship with sanofi-aventis U.S.

–Natalie Gott

BIOS turns 60!

More than 300 alumni and friends of UNC’s biostatistics department came to Chapel Hill, N.C., on Oct. 12, 2009, to celebrate the department’s 60th anniversary.

A series of presentations illuminated the department’s distinguished history, and attendees from as far away as Brazil shared remembrances about their experiences in Chapel Hill. The multiple-day event was a happy mix of scholarship and friendship.

“A key theme that emerged in our celebrations and presentations was the invaluable role of the student-mentor relationship,” said Michael Kosorok, PhD, professor and chair in the department.

“We were all moved at how many of these relationships stay vibrant and alive, beyond campus walls and past graduation.”

A fitting emblem of that phenomenon, Kosorok said, is Gary Koch, PhD, whose Festschrift* was a highlight of the celebration. Colleagues and former students presented lectures and testimonials to honor the longtime professor’s achievements. A special issue of the journal Statistics in Biopharmaceutical Research, to appear in late 2010 or 2011, will include scientific articles honoring Koch.

One of the celebratory events was a breakfast for Lawrence Kupper, PhD, Alumni Distinguished Professor of biostatistics, who retires in 2010 after 40 years on the UNC faculty.

The department was established in 1949, under the leadership of inaugural chair Bernard Greenberg, PhD. Greenberg chaired the department until he became dean of the UNC public health school in 1972.

A gallery of photographs from the event can be seen at www.sph.unc.edu/bios/60.

To honor the department’s 60th anniversary, ensure its continued preeminence, and/or honor a mentor, contact Stephen Couch, the School’s associate director of development, at (919) 966-0219 or stephen_couch@unc.edu. Ask about the Koch Scholars Program, Gary G. Koch Student Travel Funds, Global Scholar Funds and other giving opportunities.

–Linda Kastleman

* A Festschrift is a volume of essays contributed by many authors to honor a colleague.