

1920: A look back at the School of Medicine 100 Years Ago

Posted September 18, 2020

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In 1920 the School of Medicine (SOM) was beginning its 113th academic year. The 1920-21 academic year marked the first as a public institution following its merger with the Maryland State College of Agriculture (College Park). This merger prompted the Faculty of Physic, as the SOM faculty was known, to tender their resignation as sign of acceptance of the new University charter.

The Faculty of Physic of the University of Maryland enthusiastically accepted the new charter, and showed their acceptance of it, not only in the letter but in the spirit by adopting unanimously the following:

We, the undersigned, professors and members of the Faculty of Physic of the University of Maryland and College of Physicians and Surgeons, believing that the organization of the Medical Department of the new University of Maryland is most important, and having complete confidence in the ability of our new President, Dr. Woods, to carry out such organization, do herewith tender him our resignations, individually and collectively, as professors and as members of the Faculty, for his acceptance at such time as he deems fit.

We further promise Dr. Woods our heartiest co-operation in such organization, and will loyally carry out our work.

Faculty of Physic resignation following the merger of the University of Maryland with the Maryland State College of Agriculture in 1920. From article by Dr. Gordon Wilson in the Bulletin of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, December 1920. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10713/612>.

Mergers had become common in the SOM in the 1910s, in 1913 the school had merged with the Baltimore Medical College and in 1915 with The College of Physicians and Surgeons. These mergers provided access to a larger number of clinical facilities, hospitals, equipment, and faculty than had previously been available to the University of Maryland SOM. The school operated under the name, University of Maryland School of Medicine and College of Physicians and Surgeons and was led by dean, Dr. James M. H. Rowland. Dr. Rowland graduated from the SOM in 1892 and became professor of obstetrics in 1915. He soon became dean (1917) and held the position until 1940. In addition to his work as dean, Dr. Rowland was passionate about supporting women through obstetrical care and was instrumental in establishing laws to protect Baltimore mothers. Through his legal work and the establishment of hospital obstetrics programs in the city infant and maternal mortality decreased.



Dr. James M.H. Rowland, Dean of the School of Medicine 1917-1940. Image from Centuries of Leadership: Deans of the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10713/4797>.

As a result of the mergers in the 1910s, the SOM during the academic year 1920-21 had affiliations with 15 hospitals in and around Baltimore City. These institutions provided students learning opportunities as well as access to patients and instructors from around the city. These institutions included:

- University Hospital
- Mercy Hospital
- Maryland General Hospital
- Franklin Square Hospital
- Maternity Hospital of the University of Maryland
- Maryland Lying-in Hospital
- West End Maternity
- Municipal Hospitals (Baltimore City Hospitals, Bay View)
- Presbyterian Eye, Ear and Throat Charity Hospital
- James Lawrence Kernan Hospital and Industrial School of Maryland for Crippled Children
- St. Elizabeth Home of Baltimore City for Colored Children
- St. Vincent's Infant Asylum
- Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital
- Mount Hope Retreat for the Insane
- Nursery and Child's Hospital of Baltimore City

NOTICE TO STUDENTS.

The personal expenses of students are at least as low in Baltimore as in any large city in the United States. The following estimates of student's personal expenses for the academic year of eight months have been prepared by students, and are based upon actual experience:

ITEMS	LOW	AVERAGE	LIBERAL
Books.....	\$27	\$48	\$75
College Incidentals.....	20	20	20
Board, eight months.....	200	250	275
Room rent.....	64	80	100
Clothing and laundry.....	50	80	150
All other expenses.....	25	50	75
Total.....	\$386	\$529	\$695

The estimated cost of attendance for incoming students to the School of Medicine for the academic year 1920-21. Image from the Bulletin of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, July 1920. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10713/2621>.

As the above chart indicates, the cost of living for students in Baltimore in 1920 were drastically different from those of today. To better understand the 1920 costs versus today's costs, it should be noted that \$1 in 1920 is equal to \$12.96 today. In addition to the expenses listed in the chart above, matriculants to the SOM paid a \$5 fee for admittance and \$210 for tuition each year (\$2721.60 in 2020 money). There were also opportunities for special courses costing between \$50 and \$150.

Admission to the SOM required a medical student certificate issued by the State Department of Education of Maryland. To receive the certificate, students had to prove 1) completion of a four-year high school course or pass an entrance exam showing knowledge of the appropriate subject matter, and 2) two years or 60 semester hours of college credits with instruction in chemistry, biology, physics, and English. To graduate students had to complete four years of medical coursework, pass final exams (failure to do so would require repeating the failed year at the student's expense), and be deemed "fit" by the faculty. "Fitness" went beyond the student's knowledge of medicine to how they carried themselves in their personal lives and general morality.

APPENDIX B

MEDICAL STUDENTS FROM FOLLOWING STATES (1919)	J. H. M. S.	UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND	
Maryland.....	60	80	(1309)
Virginia.....	24	13	(334)
West Virginia.....	5	23	(433)
North Carolina.....	13	20	(557)
South Carolina.....	6	5	(185)
Georgia.....	15	1	(125)
Florida.....	2	2	(83)
Tennessee.....	12	0	(42)
Pennsylvania.....	26	14	(627)
Delaware.....	1	4	(30)
New Jersey.....	9	9	(191)
Total.....	173	171	(2607)

(Numbers in parentheses are residents of these states, graduated from University of Maryland.)

Medical Students from Maryland at all other medical schools than those in Maryland, 35.

Comparison of students' home state from Johns Hopkins Medical School and University of Maryland School of Medicine. From article by Dr. Gordon Wilson in Bulletin of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, December 1920. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10713/612>.

Reports in the October 1920 Alumni Bulletin indicate the highest enrollment numbers in the history of the School of Medicine. While the student body remained mostly white men, there were a few students from non-traditional backgrounds and locations including India, Santo Domingo, and Costa Rico, with a surprising number of students coming from Puerto Rico. The majority of students came from in state or the states surrounding or near Maryland. A few students came from the mid-west, north east, and deep south. The SOM had also recently begun admitting woman students (1918); however, it is unclear if there were any women students studying in the school in 1920, as Dr. Theresa O. Snaith, first woman

graduate and class of 1923, transferred to the University of Maryland from another medical school at some point during her medical education.

For more information on the SOM in 1920 please see:

1921 [Terra Mariae Yearbook](#)

1920-1921 [Academic Catalog](#)

[Bulletins](#) of the University of Maryland School of Medicine