

Teaching at the *medical school* of the *future*



By Lee Cashatt

Instructor welcomes opportunity to help shape ATSU's newest school

Thinking back more than a decade to the year his journey with ATSU began, Raymond Pavlick, Ph.D., finds the biggest change at ATSU since 1996 is the Campus. "It's culturally diverse and growing," he says. "Then it was just ASHS – now ATSU fills a niche, meeting the market need for D.O.s, and dentists with the addition of ASDOH and SOMA."

Teaching physiology at ATSU's newest school, which celebrated its one-year anniversary in July, Dr. Pavlick thinks back on SOMA's first year with a contented smile. "The immediate challenge in working with the first class of doctors has been adapting the curriculum model," he says, adding that students begin working in clinics their second year instead of years three or four. "It's a challenge to get second-year students properly prepared, but the

process gets smoother and smoother, better and better. Students have to adapt, but once acclimated, this model makes more sense."

Dr. Pavlick is no stranger to challenges. In the early '90s, he received both his B.S. and Ph.D. in physiology from the University of California, Davis, with minors in pharmacology and toxicology. He spent eight years as an E.R. patient care technician.

Prior to his full-time position at ASHS, Dr. Pavlick was associate professor of biology at Grand Canyon University, and now teaches part-time for GCU's Family Nurse Practitioner M.S. program. Not only that, he works for the city of Mesa as an instructor for the Mesa Fire Department's Paramedic Program.

Even these challenging commitments didn't deter Dr. Pavlick

from taking on perhaps his biggest challenge yet: "I wanted to teach at SOMA to start the medical school of the future," he says.

Dr. Pavlick enjoys working with students, encouraging them to do their best, and watching them progress into excellent healthcare professionals. "I am very demanding of my students," he says. "Students will email or call after graduating to say thank you for pushing them so hard in school. It's a huge impact as an educator to know they recognize what I was trying to do."

Recalling his experience as a student, Dr. Pavlick says he, too, was encouraged by an instructor – his undergraduate chemistry professor. "He knew 300 students by name in a class of 500 – that really influenced my decision to go to graduate school," he says. "He was organized, enthusiastic, and interacted with us. It was the small things like remembering our names that made the biggest impact."

With his chemistry professor as his example, Dr. Pavlick hopes to instill discipline and focus in his students, explaining that patients look for a physician who pays attention. "When patients experience a disciplined and focused physician, they are more apt to be disciplined and focused in taking care of themselves – it sets an example."

As for his future, Dr. Pavlick is already looking to the challenges ahead. In July, he joined SOMA's leadership team as assistant dean for curriculum. He says he will continue shaping SOMA as the medical school of the future, never sacrificing his commitment to teach new generations of students. ■

