

UT Southwestern Medical Center

A Message from President Daniel K. Podolsky

September 8, 2015

To the UT Southwestern Community:

As we approach the end of summer, I hope each of you enjoyed the Labor Day holiday weekend. I am writing to extend a special welcome to students, faculty, trainees, and staff who have recently joined the UT Southwestern community. As we begin the 2015-16 academic year, I also am writing to highlight for all members of the campus some of the milestones of the past year, as well as some key issues for the year ahead.

Reflecting on the past year, every member of our community should take pride in what has been accomplished. To note just some of these achievements:

- In the first ever national rankings of Graduate Medical Education programs in the U.S., five of UT Southwestern's residency programs – Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Urology, Dermatology, and Plastic Surgery – were ranked nationally among the top 10 residency programs in their fields.
- William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital opened in early December 2014. An innovative, state-of-the-art facility, it is a national model for integrating research and education with patient care, and for having its design and operations guided by the priority of providing patient-centric care. The recent successful opening of our partner Parkland's new hospital, in which our faculty and trainees played a crucial role, provides a boon to our patients there, as well as to our education and training and research missions.
- Three of our University transplant programs reached major milestones this past year. The bone marrow transplant program performed its 1,000th transplant; the 500th heart transplant was performed last fall; and the 500th lung transplant was performed in April. With the latter, we now have the distinction of being among the top 10 lung transplant programs in the country.
- Our Harold C. Simmons Cancer Center received designation of comprehensive status from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), its highest level of distinction, making it the only facility in North Texas to hold this designation and one of only 45 nationally. In addition, the Simmons Cancer Center expanded access to its services to the communities of Fort Worth and Tarrant County by opening a satellite facility within the Moncrief Cancer Institute in Fort Worth.
- Since the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) was authorized to resume its grant awards program last fall, UT Southwestern faculty received a total of \$50.6 million for faculty recruitment and research, for a total of more than \$250 million since the inception of CPRIT's grant programs in 2009.

- The Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute at UT Southwestern was launched, made possible by a gift of \$36 million from the O'Donnell Foundation. This Institute will build on UTSW's existing strengths in neuroscience and will be dedicated to achieving a better understanding of the molecular workings of the brain, and applying these discoveries to the prevention and treatment of brain diseases and injuries.
- We also established the Lyda Hill Department of Bioinformatics, supported by a \$25 million gift from the Lyda Hill Foundation. The Department will play an essential role in driving our ability to gain insights from management and analysis of massive data sets that are increasingly informing wide areas of basic and clinical science, as well as providing the foundations for clinical care improvements.
- During its first full year, the Hamon Center for Regenerative Science and Medicine, under the leadership of Dr. Eric Olson, developed a series of activities for faculty, post docs, and graduate students aimed at fulfilling its mission of seeking to improve human health by understanding the basis of organ formation, and then leveraging this knowledge to develop therapies for treating tissue injuries, degenerative disorders, and age-related diseases.
- In new leadership appointments, Dr. Deborah Diercks came from the University of California, Davis to Chair our newly created Department of Emergency Medicine, and Dr. Kathleen Bell came from the University of Washington to become Chair of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. During the year – and after national searches – Dr. Bradley Marple was named Chair of the Department of Otolaryngology, and Dr. Gaudenz Danuser was selected to be the founding Chair of the Lyda Hill Department of Bioinformatics. New Center Director appointments were Dr. Marc Diamond for the Center for Alzheimer's and Neurodegenerative Diseases, and Dr. Jay Horton for the Center for Human Nutrition.
- We also appointed 338 new faculty members, a five-year high.
- Several members of our faculty received notable recognition. Among others: Dr. Joseph Takahashi, Chair of Neuroscience, was elected to the Institute of Medicine last fall; Dr. Yuh Min Chook, Professor of Pharmacology and Biophysics, was selected to receive the 2015 Edith and Peter O'Donnell Award in Science from The Academy of Medicine, Engineering, and Science of Texas (TAMEST) in January; Dr. Sandra Schmid, Chair of Cell Biology, was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in early April; and Drs. Kim Orth and Joshua Mendell, both Professors of Molecular Biology, were named Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigators in May.
- Two UTSW faculty members were elected to the National Academy of Sciences – Dr. Lora Hooper, a Professor in the Departments of Immunology and Microbiology and in the Center for the Genetics of Host Defense, and Dr. Steven Kliewer, a Professor in the Departments of Molecular Biology and Pharmacology.
- We continue to build on our commitment to employee engagement through our managers' efforts to respond and follow up on the results of the 2015 Employee Engagement Survey. Our focus on both wellness and engagement was demonstrated by our turnout for last year's Dallas Heart Walk – more than 3,000 UTSW employees and family members participated, the most of any organization in Dallas.

The Year Ahead

As we embark on the year ahead, we will continue to be disciplined in our decision-making to ensure that we align our resources with our priorities, but we begin the year from a position of faculty, programmatic, and fiscal strength. An increase in funds provided by the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature will allow us to proceed with program initiatives and facility projects we are eager to implement.

This is a historic year for the Medical School. The Class of 2019 is inaugurating a new Medical School curriculum after several years of planning that engaged many members of our faculty, led by Drs. James Stull and Dennis Burns. As both a symbol and a statement of the new approach to team-based learning that is integral to the new curriculum, library space has been renovated to foster team-based learning (TBL). Visually and functionally, this renovated area is truly the classroom of the future.

We will be proceeding with the first phase of our West Campus Master Plan. As soon as the demolition of the former St. Paul University Hospital is completed, we will begin construction of the first of several academic and clinical buildings planned for that part of our campus. The first building will include a state-of-the-art Simulation Center, which will be an important additional resource for students and trainees, as well as for faculty physicians and other caregivers. In addition, on East Campus, construction of a new Radiation Oncology facility has begun.

Finally, in terms of on-campus developments, our state appropriation this year includes funds (for the first time since 2006) to support capital construction, which will allow us to proceed with much-needed renovation of some South Campus laboratories and to build a new vivarium on North Campus.

We have worked hard in recent years to position the UT Southwestern Health System to meet the challenges in the changing landscape of health care delivery, and I am very pleased to be able to say that our Health System is flourishing. We have seen robust volume growth at Clements and Zale Lipshy University Hospitals, as well as in our outpatient clinics.

UTSW is responding to changing expectations in healthcare delivery by expanding the footprint of the UTSW Health System. We have established our own community clinics in the Park Cities, Richardson, and Las Colinas. We also have purchased land in Frisco and will proceed with the development of an outpatient center there, in parallel with construction of a multispecialty facility as the first phase of development of the UT Southwestern Monty and Tex Moncrief Medical Center at Fort Worth.

The latter has been made possible in part by a \$25 million gift received from W.A. "Tex" Moncrief. The new campus will build on UTSW's recent expansion of the Moncrief Cancer Institute and will significantly strengthen UTSW's capacity to serve the population of Fort Worth and its surrounding areas. We expect to complete this first building by the end of 2016, where we will provide an array of UTSW specialty care at a site convenient to that community.

Expansion of UTSCAP (UT Southwestern Clinically Affiliated Physicians), our network of primary care physicians, is an important complement to the development of these new facilities, which are intended to expand and facilitate access to UTSW specialty physicians. We expect that UTSCAP will soon surpass

400 primary care physicians practicing at more than 55 sites in the region, enabling convenient access to primary care integrated with our health system for those throughout the Metroplex.

In the growth of our clinical programs, we hope to enrich the learning environment opportunities for our students and trainees, as well as to provide a foundation for expanded clinical and translational research programs. And even more important than the expansion of our health system will be redoubled effort focused on enhancing, through rigorous assessment of outcomes and continuous quality improvement, the quality and safety of the care we deliver.

In conclusion, I think we can be proud of what we have accomplished together in this past year and look forward to the new year with confidence. Every member of our community, irrespective of your specific role, contributes to the totality of UT Southwestern. Each of us has a duty to those who trust in us – our patients, our colleagues, and the state of Texas – to perform our roles with integrity, quality, and commitment to UT Southwestern’s missions of education, research, and patient care.

My very best wishes to each of you for this new academic year.

Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D.
President, UT Southwestern Medical Center