

ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

THOUGHTS AND UPDATES FROM DR. W. P. ANDREW LEE

June 21, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

I write to share the news that **Dane K. Wukich, M.D., M.S.**, holder of the Dr. Charles F. Gregory Distinguished Chair in Orthopaedic Surgery, has announced his intention to step down from his position as Chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery after a successor is identified.

Under his leadership since 2016, the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery has expanded its clinical volume by more than 60% at UT Southwestern clinics and hospitals. Its faculty also care for patients at Parkland Memorial Hospital, the Dallas Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Children's Medical Center Dallas, and Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children.

Dr. Wukich has championed robust collaborations with other clinical departments at UT Southwestern. Along with the chairs of Neurological Surgery, Anesthesiology, and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, a multidisciplinary comprehensive Spine Center was developed with a patient-centric focus. Dr. Wukich partnered with colleagues from plastic surgery to create a comprehensive diabetic foot program to reduce the rate of major amputations and address health care inequity and disparity in patients in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. In 2017, Dr. Wukich oversaw the establishment of an Ortho-Oncology team to strengthen the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center.

His commitment to enhancing patient care has earned the Department national recognition. Earlier this year, the Returning Seniors to Orthopaedic Excellence (RESTORE) Program was awarded The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Hip Fracture Certification. The program has achieved an average time of 19 hours from admission to surgery for hip fractures, compared to the national average time of 36 hours.

He has supported a team of clinical and basic researchers who incorporate biomechanics and clinical modalities into research focused on improving care and developing new therapies. In 2022, the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research ranked UTSW's Orthopaedic Surgery Department No. 19 in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding. Scholarship, as measured by peer-reviewed publications cited on PUBMED, has increased from approximately 70 in 2016 to more than 200 publications in 2022.

Dr. Wukich joined UT Southwestern in 2016 as Chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery after serving as Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, where he was Medical Director of the Wound and Healing Center, and Division Chief of Foot and Ankle Surgery.

Prior to his career in academic medicine, Dr. Wukich served in the Army as a Medical Corps Major. His experiences as Chief of Orthopaedic Surgery for the 5th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm shaped his collaborative leadership style and were valuable in establishing strong relationships between the UT Southwestern Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and the VA North Texas Health Care System.

I am pleased to announce that **Herbert Zeh, M.D.**, Professor and Chair, Department of Surgery, will serve as Chair of the committee that will conduct a national search to identify Dr. Wukich's successor. Other members of the Search Committee are:

- Melanie Cobb, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Pharmacology
- Nitin Jain, M.D., M.S.P.H., Professor and Vice Chair, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- Jeffrey Kenkel, M.D., Professor and Chair, Department of Plastic Surgery
- Steven Leach, M.D., Professor and Associate Vice Chair of Clinical Operations, Department of Internal Medicine
- Angela Mihalic, M.D., Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Dean of Medical Students, and Associate Dean of the Office of Student Affairs
- Toral Patel, M.D., Associate Professor, Department of Neurological Surgery
- Margaret Pearle, M.D., Ph.D., Professor, Department of Urology
- Rawle Philbert, D.D.S., Associate Professor and Division Chief, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Department of Surgery
- Daniel Sucato, M.D., Professor, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children
- Seth Toomay, M.D., Professor, Department of Radiology, Associate Vice President, and Health System Chief Medical Officer
- Dwight Towler, M.D., Ph.D., Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, and Associate Dean of Resident Research
- Steven Bloom, M.D., (Ex-officio) Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Associate Dean of Clinical Sciences

The search will be launched shortly. We are grateful for Dr. Wukich's service and contributions to the institution and look forward to building upon them as we continue to advance Orthopaedic Surgery research, education, and clinical care at UT Southwestern.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

W. P. Andrew Lee, M.D.

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Dean, UT Southwestern Medical School

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