

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to announce the appointment of **James H. Willig, M.D., M.S.P.H.**, as Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, effective February 10, 2025.

Dr. Willig joins us from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) where he is Assistant Dean of Clinical Education and Professor of Medicine (with tenure) in Infectious Diseases.

Dr. Willig grew up in the Dominican Republic and obtained his medical degree at the Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo. He completed a residency in internal medicine at the University of Virginia Roanoke-Salem and continued his postgraduate training as a fellow in infectious diseases at UAB. Dr. Willig obtained a Master of Science in Public Health from UAB and, more recently, spent six months as a Visiting Scientist at Oracle Cerner Corporation as part of a multidisciplinary innovation team.



Over the last 12 years, Dr. Willig has promoted medical education in progressive leadership roles, first as Internal Medicine Clerkship Director, and then as inaugural Assistant Dean of Clinical Education since 2016, overseeing the clinical years of UAB's medical school curriculum across four campuses. Under his leadership, clinical skills training was redesigned as a four-year, longitudinal, competency-based program. Clinical skills and clinical reasoning are now integrated into every aspect of the preclinical and clinical medical school curriculum and point-of-care ultrasound training is taught as the fifth pillar of the physical exam with students beginning to scan in their first month of medical school.

Board certified in clinical informatics, Dr. Willig has focused on the practical applications of clinical informatics on quality improvement, clinical outcomes, and medical education. He has played pivotal roles in designing over 10 software applications to enhance clinical care, research, and medical education. He partnered with Medical Education Informatics Services to create a clerkship app to centralize student tracking of required clinical encounters, mid-month formative feedback evaluations, and bedside clinical assessments. The application facilitates data gathering in the clinical years to help students track their personal growth, eases the job of clerkship directors managing their courses, and provides school level data to monitor emerging issues across all campuses.

We would like to express our appreciation to the Search Committee members – Reeni Abraham, M.D.; Adam Brenner, M.D.; James “Brad” Cutrell, M.D.; David Greenberg, M.D.; Temple Howell-Stampley, M.D.; Won Lee, M.D.; Angela Mihalic, M.D.; William “Gary” Reed, M.D.; Joyce Repa, Ph.D., and Daniel Sepdham, M.D. – for the dedication and insights they brought to this comprehensive national search.

Dr. Willig succeeds Robert “Bob” Rege, M.D., who retired earlier this year after 26 years at UT Southwestern. Dr. Rege served as Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education since 2015, capably leading the program through a four-year staged reform of the curriculum, an LCME accreditation visit, and the rapid adaptation of the curriculum in response to the COVID pandemic.

As we chart the next era of education at UT Southwestern, Dr. Willig's passion, skills, and innovative approach will help reshape our medical student instruction with lasting impact.

Sincerely,

Sherry Huang, M.D.  
Vice Provost and Senior Associate Dean for Education

W. P. Andrew Lee, M.D.  
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost  
Dean, UT Southwestern Medical School