



Strategic Planning Update

June 8, 2012

To the UT Southwestern Community:

Last week we marked the end of the academic year with commencement exercises for our Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and the Medical School. Now that we have said goodbye to our newly minted graduates and head into the summer, I thought it timely to reflect on the many accomplishments of this past year that should be a source of pride and pleasure for the entire UT Southwestern community.

In the past year we have seen the continued vitality and expansion of our laboratory research programs. This has included the establishment of two major new research initiatives: the Center for the Genetics of Host Defense and, in partnership with Children's Medical Center, the Children's Research Institute at UT Southwestern. These have made possible the recruitment of their outstanding, world-renowned leaders, Dr. Bruce Beutler and Dr. Sean Morrison. In addition, we have established a new Department of Biophysics, led by our own Dr. Mike Rosen, and the Cecil H. and Ida Green Center for Systems Biology, under the leadership of Dr. Rama Ranganathan, has been able to expand and become a Comprehensive Center, thanks to the generosity of community benefactors. I note also the new leadership brought to our Department of Cell Biology by the recruitment of Dr. Sandy Schmid from the Scripps Research Institute.

Certainly none on the campus will soon forget the excitement we all shared with the award of the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine to Dr. Beutler. This was one of many national and international prizes given to our faculty over the past year, reflecting broad recognition of the continued excellence of the work done by UT Southwestern faculty. Within the state, our faculty continue to lead the way in collectively garnering more support from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) than any other institution, based on the merits of their grant applications, as assessed through a rigorous peer review process.

This has also been a year of significant progress in the further transformation of our clinical care programs and health care system. We have continued to expand our efforts and our commitment to clinical quality, safety, and effectiveness, as we also increase the scale and scope of our clinical programs. This year we opened a second site for radiation oncology, where patients are offered a cancer treatment technology unavailable elsewhere in the hemisphere. We also now have a new and enlarged bone marrow transplant inpatient unit in St. Paul University Hospital. Our solid organ transplantation programs have continued to grow, and the outcomes for our patients receiving new hearts and lungs, in particular, are among the best in the country.

Our clinical departments have also gained additional momentum through new leadership. With the recently announced recruitment of Dr. Hunt Batjer as next Chair of Neurological Surgery, seven clinical departments have new chairpersons, and three more searches are in progress. Another important addition to our clinical leadership was the appointment of Dr. John Warner as University Hospitals Chief Executive Officer.

We continue to look to the future both programmatically and to ensure that our facilities match our aspirations for excellence in the quality of care we deliver. In the past year we completed an intensive and comprehensive planning process to prepare for the full range of potential changes that we need to address in health care delivery, including the implications of the Supreme Court decision on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Health Care Reform), whatever that outcome may be. We are already implementing recommendations for new initiatives in models of health care delivery and payment, including medical homes, bundled payment approaches, and preparations for participation as an accountable care organization. In a related development, we have formed a partnership in this past year with Texas Health Resources, which continues to evolve as we collaborate in quality measurement and improvement, as well as in delivering complex tertiary and quaternary care.

I hope everyone on campus is also sharing the excitement of seeing the construction of the William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital. This project is proceeding ahead of schedule and remains better than budget. Planning is already underway for “moving day” in the latter part of 2014. We have also completed an extensive planning process for Zale Lipshy University Hospital and its future. A bold vision, which we have begun to implement, has been developed for Zale Lipshy to serve as the clinical center of our commitment to UT Southwestern being in the vanguard of academic and clinical programs in neurosciences.

We also share the excitement of the progress of the new Parkland Hospital. Without question Parkland Hospital and all of us who are part of its efforts have faced a very challenging past year. However, everyone at UT Southwestern should take pride that our faculty and residents have cared for more than 45,000 inpatients and hundreds of thousands of outpatients at Parkland over the course of this year—many of whom would otherwise have no recourse—and in knowing that that care was delivered with compassion and a deep commitment to the patient’s best welfare.

In addition to the momentum in our research and clinical programs, this year has seen a number of other important new initiatives and the maturation of others begun in the last academic year. These include the efforts of our Office of Global Health, which has helped to establish and now oversees institutional collaborations with strong partners in Asia, South America, the Middle East, and Africa. We can also point to the further expanded scope of the efforts of our Office of Faculty Diversity and Development, with the appointment of Dr. Helen Yin as Assistant Dean to head the new Office of Women’s Careers.

I am also pleased that, through the efforts of many and led by our Human Resources Department, we have been able to significantly expand the ways in which we support and develop the careers of the staff of this medical center. Among these are the tuition reimbursement program, the newly established Masters Program for Leadership Development, and the wellness program. Our Employee Advisory Council of representatives elected from all sectors of the campus has provided valuable guidance to the design and administration of these efforts.

I hope that everyone who is part of the UT Southwestern community will take pride in the many important ways we have made progress in advancing our mission in this past year. Even this list of notable milestones is an incomplete summary of the achievements of UT Southwestern faculty and staff – and it is important to recognize that these have all been achieved despite the challenge of a significant reduction in our state appropriation. It is only with collective discipline and a commitment to focus on our priorities that it has been possible for us, working together, to have maintained the momentum that this summary reflects.

A few years ago, I identified seven priorities that I thought would be important for UT Southwestern's future. I am pleased that we have made substantial progress in each of these areas, and moreover, as progress has been made, we continue to take a forward looking view. Our recently completed six-year plan sets out an ambitious framework for the future.

In the course of day-to-day activities and the sometimes superimposed challenges, it can be easy to overlook the remarkable achievements made possible through the efforts of the faculty and staff of this institution. I hope this year end summary provides that broader perspective. Having the privilege of being the president of this medical center, I want to thank each of you for all that you do every day here at UT Southwestern.

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