

Dean's Corner
April, 2006

Dear Texas Tech Family,

Spring in El Paso is definitely a time of change. The weather has become truly beautiful, the spring winds are dying down, and the flowers and greenery are making a colorful show. There have been dramatic changes at Texas Tech as well, but in the midst of this we are continuing to work toward our long-term goal of establishing a four-year medical school in El Paso. This vision will require us to make many changes in our educational efforts and the way we provide patient care. I will say more about that in the weeks and months ahead.

Strengthening the Base

Sub-Specialty Fellowship Initiative.

As I mentioned last month, I have set aside funds to begin development of subspecialty fellowships and have requested proposals from the clinical departments. This is a critical step in our progress toward becoming a true academic health center and referral resource for the entire region. Active fellowship programs promote not only enhanced patient care with expanded clinical capabilities, but also opportunities for research and a stronger academic environment. Internal Medicine, arguably the most sub-specialized of the disciplines, leads the way in this effort with proposals for gastroenterology, nephrology, and pulmonary/critical care. Successful fellowship programs will require expansion of the faculty and commitment of resources for fellowship stipends and research support. Other proposals have come from Family Medicine and Surgery. Mr. James Valenti, President and CEO of the El Paso County Hospital District, agrees with me on the importance of this initiative and has given his full encouragement and support to the plan. I plan to present our proposals to Thomason Hospital this month.

Infinity Campaign. By now you will have received information about how you can support the *Infinity Campaign*. Please give serious consideration about your participation as a donor to this important fund raising activity. Dr. Chris Powers, Medical Community Gifts Chairman, and his committees are working hard to make the faculty and staff components of this campaign successful. They have set a goal of 100% participation in order to send the message that we are willing to invest in a better health care future for El Paso.

Changes in Administration

President

President Wilson remains under consideration for the Chancellor position of the combined University of Colorado-Denver and the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Notice of the status of that appointment is forthcoming.

Dean of the School of Medicine

Steven Berk, MD, Regional Dean of the Amarillo campus of the School of Medicine was named as the new Dean of the School of Medicine on March 30. Dr. Berk, a highly respected internist and accomplished teacher, has demonstrated outstanding leadership in

his position as Regional Dean for the past several years. During his tenure, the clinical and teaching programs of that campus have developed and expanded, research activity has greatly expanded, and the community relationships of the school have provided a model for the rest of the institution. His enthusiasm, hard work, and clear thinking have provided a demonstration of leadership by example. Undoubtedly he will bring those same attributes to his new position. I am sure you join me in congratulating Dr. Berk and in wishing him success as Dean of the School of Medicine.

Founding Dean for the El Paso School of Medicine

The search for the Founding Dean for the El Paso School of Medicine continues. The Search Committee continues to receive and review applications from potential candidates from all over the country. The first review has resulted in the selection of four individuals who have been invited for a first visit to the campus within the weeks ahead. As these visits are scheduled, my office will inform faculty and staff. There will be opportunities for individuals from the campus to meet with the candidates and to hear their thoughts about a number of issues that concern us all as we move ahead in our planning for the new medical school.

While the leadership picture changes over the next several months, our mission and work on the El Paso Campus continues: we continue to attend to our patients focusing on organizing our multiple sites and clinics into a group practice; we continue to develop our faculty for their future roles as academicians within our new school; and, most importantly, we continue to educate our residents and students to become our physicians in El Paso.

I would like to thank our staff and faculty for keeping their “eye on the prize” and not deviating from our targets. I plan to keep our scheduled monthly Regional Dean’s Update Session on April 28th, 2006 at 12:00 noon in Room A3500 and cordially invite all staff, faculty, students, and residents to our discussions.

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