

## **FEBRUARY DEAN'S CORNER**

**Dear Texas Tech Family,**

There continue to be many exciting events on our campus that demonstrate our progress in realizing the dream of a four-year medical school in El Paso. At the same time, the month ahead will see the beginning of the budget process for the next academic year.

### **Dedication of the Medical Research Building**

Dignitaries representing the Texas Tech System, the community, and the Legislature gathered on Tuesday, January 31st to dedicate the Medical Science Building I, culminating three years of planning and construction. This facility is the first of several buildings that will form the core of our new East Campus. With its hand-cut limestone façade and dramatic porticos, the building will set the standard for the rest of the campus. But it is also a state-of-the-art research facility that will provide outstanding capabilities for our expanding research program. Many of the first occupants have moved into their laboratories, and space has been set aside for the basic science leaders who are currently being recruited.

### **Search Committee for the Founding Dean**

The search committee held its organizational meeting in El Paso on January 13. The committee is chaired by Dr. Camacho and has been charged by President Wilson to identify three candidates for the position of Founding Dean by the autumn of this year. Members of the committee include: Drs. Paul Casner, Dale Dunn (Lubbock), Daniel Hardy (Lubbock), Kathryn Horn, Marjorie Jenkins (Amarillo), Antonio Jesurun, Reid Norman (Lubbock), Cynthia Rivera (VA), Pratibha Shirsat, Frank Talamantes, Patti Patterson (Lubbock), Kathryn Zerbach (El Paso Medical Society), and Darryl Williams. Mr. Jim Valenti will represent R.E. Thomason Hospital and Jason Tcheng will serve as the student representative. The committee plans to meet with a wide range of stakeholders including department chairs, faculty members, staff, community representatives, and hospital officials to receive their thoughts about desirable characteristics of the Founding Dean. This is clearly an important appointment, as the Founding Dean will provide leadership for the faculty and community in the establishment of the new school of medicine.

### **Loss of Title VII Funding**

As many of you are aware, President Bush recently signed the budget bill for the next fiscal year. Many domestic programs were cut, including the so-called "Title VII Funding" for programs of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). This cutback has resulted in the loss of funding for many educational and scholarship initiatives in health care professions for under-represented minority populations. Although it is still too early to know the exact impact of these changes, it is clear that at least three of our current HRSA programs will be affected. These programs include the Hispanic Center of Excellence, the Health Careers Opportunity Program, and the Health Education Training Center. We are working on plans to maintain the very positive activities of these programs.

### **Department Reviews**

The process of reviewing our departments is moving along at a very rapid pace. The Department of Pathology has completed the entire process. Over several weeks, the department completed a self-study questionnaire developed within TTUHSC at El Paso. The self-study provided background information for the internal review committee who interviewed a number of individuals with particular interest in the department. The report of this committee then served as additional information for a team of external reviewers who visited the campus on February 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>, meeting with a number of individuals and developing verbal and written reports. Barbara Ducatman, MD, Chair of Pathology at West Virginia University and Guillermo Herrera, MD, Chair of Pathology at Louisiana State University School of Medicine at Shreveport will serve as the external reviewers.

The Departments of Obstetrics/Gynecology and Pediatrics are well into a similar process, and site visits of external reviewers will be scheduled in the near future. The Departments of Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, and Radiology have initiated the self-study process. Their site visits will occur within the next several months.

#### **Infinity Campaign**

The fund raising campaign continues with impressive success. The current tally is \$17 million, within sight of the goal of \$25 million. A committee, led by Dr. Christopher Powers, has been established to spearhead the effort to obtain faculty and staff support for this effort. Many have already responded with generous contributions. I hope that all of our Texas Tech family will join in supporting this campaign. The success of this campaign is a very positive message that the El Paso community and the campus are in strong support of the new medical school.

*Jose Manuel de la Rosa, M.D.*

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