

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

This communication reviews the status, progress and goals of the UTHSC educational enterprise.

UTHSC is overwhelmingly the largest graduate level health care educator in the state of Tennessee, offering 34 undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees under the auspices of our six colleges. All of our professional programs undergo a rigorous accreditation process by their respective accrediting bodies, and all have received accreditation for the maximum time period allowed. These programs maintain a graduation rate that exceeds 90% and a first-time board pass rate that exceeds 90%. In addition to these professional programs, our College of Graduate Health Sciences offers a variety of graduate programs, providing active research experiences for more than 230 graduate students. We also sponsor 93 accredited residencies and fellowships, providing advanced training in a wide range of medical, surgical and other health profession specialties. Overall, we enroll approximately 2,900 students in addition to 1,200 residents and fellows.

And we continue to grow. Several new programs are either approved or are in the process of being approved to begin during the coming academic year. Our College of Nursing has been approved to reactivate its BSN program, and will provide an RN to BSN option as well as traditional BSN option on the Memphis campus. Our College of Allied Health Sciences, in conjunction with UTK, will offer a new joint Bachelor of Science in Audiology and Speech Pathology degree in the coming academic year. In addition, the approval process for our Master's of Medical Science - Physician Assistant Program is well under way. We are hopeful that final approvals will soon be secured, allowing us to launch this program in January 2014. The College of Graduate Health Sciences is currently developing two new programs – a Master of Science in Laboratory Research and Management along with a possible joint degree with UT Knoxville in public health. Finally, with the addition of a postgraduate program in endodontics, our College of Dentistry is now one of only a few dental colleges in the country that offers the full spectrum of advanced training for dentists.

As you know, the scope of our educational enterprise is statewide, from the campus in Memphis that serves as the home base for all six of our colleges, to clinical campuses in both Chattanooga and Knoxville, where portions of our programs in allied health, medicine and pharmacy are offered. Our core teaching hospitals in Memphis (Le Bonheur, Methodist University, The MED and the VA), Erlanger Medical Center in Chattanooga, the UT Medical Center in Knoxville, and the Saint Thomas Health System in metropolitan Nashville (Saint Thomas, Baptist Nashville, and Middle Tennessee Medical Center in Murfreesboro) as well as other facilities throughout the state provide the key hands-on, patient care training we need for the clinical portion of our existing programs. We also have a rapidly growing clinical presence supporting our Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy in Nashville, and anticipate a significant expansion of our Nashville activities in association with the Saint Thomas Health System. Initially this expansion will involve graduate medical education programs in medicine, surgery, surgical specialties, family medicine, emergency medicine, and obstetrics and gynecology;

however, ultimately, we anticipate that the Saint Thomas connection will provide training opportunities for many, if not most, of our professional programs. Our strategy has been one of steady expansion to meet the needs of the state in terms of our professional graduates.

We have aggressively renovated all of our professional education facilities on the Memphis campus to maintain optimal levels of pre-clinical training. We have completely remodeled lecture and laboratory facilities in the General Education, Pharmacy, Dentistry and Madison Plaza buildings to state-of-the-art status. When we renovate the historic portion of our campus, as approved by the Governor's proposed budget, the College of Nursing will return to the original quadrangle in the Crowe building, bringing significant numbers of students back to this storied section of our campus for the first time in many years. Last, but not least, building of the UTHSC multi-disciplinary simulation center this year will be a foundation for our pre-clinical activities. One other new initiative that impacts all the colleges is the ongoing development of a One Stop Shop of student services in the Madison Plaza building on the Memphis campus, along with online services that provide ready access to student services wherever the student is located.

The educational enterprise is the cornerstone of the Health Science Center. We are proud to be the state's leading educator of advanced degree health care providers and one of the largest educators in the Southern and Midwestern region. Our relationships with our core teaching hospitals allow us to span the state and provide a wealth of clinical training opportunities. We have worked to keep our tuition at or below the median for southeastern states, while maintaining graduation and board pass rates that place us among the top tier in the United States.

In summary, our education mission is performing at a very high level. We will continue a graded, careful expansion of all our professional colleges, adding new programs as needed to train health care professionals for the state of Tennessee. I remain grateful for the hard work of the past and present faculty, staff and students who have led us to this position.

Steve J. Schwab, MD
Chancellor