



# UPSTATE

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION • HEALTHCARE • RESEARCH

## *Office of the President*

August 9, 2016

### **A message to the Upstate Medical University community**

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

Some speak of a summer slowdown on college campuses, but not at an academic medical university. Our mission of patient care, education and research at the service of our communities takes no holidays!

But I do want to take this moment to pause and highlight some key activities that are making this a productive summer.

Our work on building a new strategic plan continues to move forward. A two-day retreat of leaders across the university featured a wide-ranging discussion developing key points and building on the four themes that will guide our decision making. The themes are:

**Integration:** Upstate is one university, connected by mission and aligned leadership integrated through a culture of inclusion, transparency and trust.

**Innovative Learning and Discovery:** Upstate is a destination of choice for patients and innovative employees, educators, learners and researchers.

**Community Impact:** Upstate is a collaborative and trusted partner in service to our communities.

**Execution and Growth:** Upstate is an excellent university growing through aligned decision making, efficient, effective operations, quality services and a dedicated and diverse workforce.

These leaders discussed the opportunities that must be created in areas, such as finances, internal processes and organizational capabilities to meet our goals. Sparking innovative learning and discovery will strengthen our University's ability to encourage and foster creative collaboration that leads to health improvements.

Our strategic planning process is at the early stages and there will be much more information and involvement on your part in months ahead. Thank you for your continued interest in this important work.

#### **University Activities and Updates**

Two important openings are under way:

- Upstate's new *Pediatric Emergency* services for children and adolescents earns much praise from parents throughout the region and this new unit to care for medical emergencies underscores our steadfast commitment to providing the best care in the best setting for our most vulnerable populations.

- I had the pleasure of touring the nearly completed *New Academic Building*, an incredible setting for learning with impressive views from every angle, ample space for students to gather and collaborate on studies in support of their inter-professional education, and classrooms that reflect the latest designs for learning. Students of the College of Health Professions and College of Nursing will be welcomed into this setting as will all learners, with easy access through the bridges to Weiskotten Hall, the College of Medicine and Upstate University Hospital. Please mark your calendar for our opening celebration Sept. 7, 2016.



*I had the opportunity to tour the new academic building last month with SUNY Trustee Joseph Belluck and Leslie Kohman, MD.*

I want to offer my praise for all who had a hand at bringing these important projects to completion.

The College of Medicine also rolls out a new streamlined curriculum that changes the first two pre-clerkship years to include more clinical context and self-directed learning. These changes will increase collaboration among the clinical and basic science faculty, putting a stronger focus on inter-professional education, community health and civic engagement. Kudos to all who have worked to make these changes a reality.

I also want to update you on some personnel matters. Wanda Thompson, PhD, who served as Senior Vice President for Operations is no longer working at Upstate. Dr. Thompson served in that capacity for close to nine years. If you need assistance during this transition, please contact Nancy Prott in my office at 464-4513.

The College of Medicine Dean Search Committee, led by Patricia Kane, PhD, and Luis Mejico, MD, is reviewing applications and making good progress, and I have asked Donald Simpson, PhD, Dean of the College of Health Professions, to stay on as interim dean of the College of Nursing until a permanent dean is appointed. I thank Dr. Simpson for his incredible support and leadership.

Finally, punctuating the end of summer vacation is the New York State Fair. All elements of Upstate will be highlighted in our exhibit at the fair, which runs from Aug. 25 to Sept. 5. The fair is an opportunity to showcase Upstate as one university to the one million people who are expected to attend this late summer tradition. Many of you will volunteer and be the face of Upstate during the run of the fair. Thank you for your volunteer service.

And thank you all for your service to Upstate.

Sincerely,

Danielle Laraque-Arena, MD, FAAP  
President, Upstate Medical University