



UPSTATE

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION • HEALTHCARE • RESEARCH

Office of the President

February 8, 2016

A message to the Upstate Medical University community

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

What a terrific week that was. Starting with our inspirational Black History Month celebration and ending with a full schedule of Go Red Day heart healthy activities aimed at improving our employees' health and wellness, the week underscored the variety of inspiring work that academic medical institutions do every day, and the outstanding employees who do it.

Recognizing the work of all of you is important in so many ways. It helps to strengthen relationships, foster employee engagement and loyalty to our organization. I look forward to being a part of our Employee Recognition and Convocation awards and Employee Recognition Day and I encourage us all to take time and recognize the value of your colleagues.

Some of those employees are our vision researchers, who I met with last week on my tour of the Institute for Human Performance and Neurosciences Research Building. So encouraging is their work and the effort this institution has made and will continue to make to ensure that they have the right tools and research support as we shed a brighter light on the darkness of blindness.

At a recent community reception, I was offered well wishes by community leaders, local and state elected officials and presidents of area SUNY institutions, all of whom have stated a great willingness to connect with Upstate on various projects. I had an opportunity to speak before the group and offered them a brief summary of four early steps we are taking to move this institution to the highest level of performance.

One is my commitment to weekly communication to keep you abreast of my orientation to the university and my engagement in conversations with you.

Two is the need for full engagement of faculty, staff and students at all levels to contribute to a dynamic process of change across the institution.

Three is to engage in active outreach to our health system neighbors to develop win-win collaborative relationships wherever possible.

Four is to ensure active engagement with our local, state and national elected leaders and community leaders to support their efforts on behalf of our university and community and to have them support us in addressing our key health priorities.

I want to share a moment from last week that was not on my calendar, but clearly underscored the importance of Upstate in the region. As Vice President Amberg and I walked back from touring IHP, a giant Blackhawk helicopter hovered overhead and touched down on the hospital's helipad. It was on a training mission. We are here for Fort Drum 90 miles away just as we are for the family down the street. What a powerful reminder of the important work we do and how much the community relies on us to be here and be the best in the delivery of excellence in health care.

Today, I will continue to put into action the engagement with our elected leaders as I travel to Albany to attend Chancellor Zimpher's budget testimony at the joint hearing of the State Senate Finance Committee and the State Assembly Ways & Means Committee. It is important that state support for SUNY is robust and that we show our communities a return on their investment.

Thank you. I am excited and energized to be here.

Sincerely,

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