



## Message from President Podolsky

September 6, 2013

To the UT Southwestern Community:

Now that Labor Day is behind us and the academic year has begun, I am writing to welcome those who are new to our UT Southwestern community, as well as to share perspectives on the year ahead.

In this coming year, we will be continuing the academic leadership renewal that has been underway for the past few years. Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Greg Fitz, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Provost, and Dean of the Medical School; Dr. Bruce Meyer, Executive Vice President for Health System Affairs; and the countless hours spent by faculty chairs and members of search committees, fourteen new Department Chairs and Center Directors have been recruited since 2010.

The most recent appointment, Dr. Michael Choti, will come from Johns Hopkins University to assume his new position as Chair of the Department of Surgery on October 1, 2013. We also anticipate the appointment of several other new leaders of academic departments and centers, as six national searches are currently in progress. In addition, I note that last month, our colleague, Andrew Zinn, M.D., Ph.D., a geneticist and Professor in the Department of Internal Medicine and the Eugene McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development, was appointed the new Dean of the UT Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

While long-term funding for scientific research still looms as a major challenge, we are fortunate to be starting the 2013-14 academic year with an improved state economy, which was reflected in an increase in the funds appropriated to UT Southwestern during the recently concluded 2013 legislative session.

We were very pleased that our state allocation included special funding for a new UT Southwestern priority initiative – the Texas Institute for Brain Injury and Repair, which will be an important component of our overall neurosciences program. The Institute will be devoted to basic research on brain injury and to translating research results into innovative treatments for patients and improved approaches to prevention for soldiers, athletes, and others who are at greatest risk.

Consistent with our commitment to ongoing clinical quality improvement and to positioning UT Southwestern to flourish as the provisions of the Affordable Care Act continue to be implemented and other changes occur in the external landscape of health care delivery, several

initiatives are in progress. These include operational simplification and implementation of clinical pathways to ensure that we are following best practices in providing high quality, cost-efficient patient care. A rigorous approach to assessment of quality in every dimension and continuous improvement in both outcomes and patient experience remain the cornerstones of clinical transformation.

The most visible physical manifestation of the evolution of our Health System and of our commitment to clinical transformation is the William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital currently under construction. Designed to be a state-of-the-art facility that promotes innovation and the incorporation of research, education, and training into the provision of high quality, patient-centered clinical care, construction of the new hospital is on budget and on track to be completed next summer. We will be planning events and tours for the campus community for next summer and early fall, the period leading up to the hospital's actual opening in November 2014.

In parallel, we will continue implementation of plans for Zale Lipshy University Hospital to become the clinical center of our commitment to being in the vanguard of academic and clinical programs in the neurosciences.

We have also now opened two off-campus UT Southwestern clinical centers (in the Park Cities and Richardson), with a third one planned for Arlington, and we are actively engaged in expanding our collaborations with community hospitals, clinics, and physicians in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

This fall, we will be seeking approval from the UT System Board of Regents to proceed with design of the first building of our West Campus Master Plan, with the hope that construction can begin soon after the demolition of St. Paul University Hospital, which will follow our move to the William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital. We expect the West Campus to eventually include five new buildings that will provide sophisticated educational space, as well as additional outpatient clinical facilities.

Along with our development of the UT Southwestern Health System, we remain committed to our core affiliations with Parkland Memorial Hospital and Children's Medical Center. Our collaborations with them are central to our educational and training programs as we care for our patients who depend on these partners. Parkland will be opening its new hospital in 2015, and with the recent validation of hospital operations that Parkland received from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, our Parkland colleagues can now move forward fully focused on Parkland's mission and on planning its future.

As an additional step in implementing the strategic priority of our commitment to diversity, the Office of Equal Opportunity has been renamed the Office of Diversity & Inclusion and Equal Opportunity and will be expanding its mission to encompass a proactive approach to diversity and inclusion in regard to UT Southwestern staff. Its expanded mission will encompass efforts within Human Resources and will complement the focus on student diversity through the Office

of Minority Student Affairs and on faculty diversity through the Office of Faculty Diversity and Development.

We will continue to develop our Global Health initiative in important ways in the year ahead. We now have affiliations with leading medical centers in China, Israel, Peru, and South Africa, and these partnerships are expanding the opportunities they offer for joint scientific research and for collaborative educational and training activities.

We will also continue efforts that began this past year under Arnim Dontes, Executive Vice President for Business Affairs, to streamline administrative activities, such as the now completed consolidation of pre-award and post-award grant functions in a new Office of Sponsored Programs Administration.

Finally, we will be taking major new steps during the 2013-14 academic year to enhance our information technology capabilities. A task force that was formed last winter to develop a strategic master plan for Information Resources will soon conclude its work and will be submitting recommendations for consideration and action; the installation of PeopleSoft has made it possible to create various dashboards that will enhance our ability to both make data-driven decisions and monitor their implementation; and we will be creating an Enterprise Wide Data Warehouse that will be a significant contribution to the quality, accuracy, and alignment of data across the institution.

It is clear that there is considerable momentum on the campus in delivering on our core missions, and we are committed to sustaining progress in the coming year. We do, however, also face major challenges, most especially external pressures on research funding, given the effects of sequestration legislation on federal funding. While we hope to see CPRIT soon return to funding previously approved grants and to soliciting new applications, that has not yet occurred. And while we have taken important steps in our Health System to improve our delivery of high quality, cost-effective care, there are still many uncertainties about the impact that implementation of the Affordable Care Act will have on institutions such as UT Southwestern.

In conclusion, our institutional agenda is very full, and our aspirations remain very high. We can achieve our goals – but only through a campus-wide commitment to excellence, to discipline in focusing on our strategic priorities, and to understanding that everyone’s work, no matter what position they hold, makes a difference in contributing to the quality of our efforts in pursuing UT Southwestern’s missions of education, patient care, and biomedical research.

While there is absolutely no room for complacency, with your support and dedicated efforts, I believe that we are well positioned for the years ahead. Every member of the UT Southwestern community should take pride in contributing to our success and should feel responsible for fulfilling our aspirations.

I thank each of you for what you do every day and look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D.

President, UT Southwestern Medical Center