Message From The Chair

‘Tis the season for reflection and resolutions for the future. Upon reflection, I’m happy many of our resolutions of the past year came to fruition with positive changes, new faces and programs and accomplishments recognized for faculty, trainees, students and staff. In the UA Department of Medicine, 2016 was an exciting year in which we can take pride and enjoyment on a job well done.

Clinically, our transplant nephrologists and others in the Kidney Transplant Program helped the number of kidney transplants this year break all records and our Pulmonary and Critical Care team helped recertify the Lung Transplant Program. Now, that's teamwork!

New Adult Cystic Fibrosis Program Director Dr. Tammy Clark Ojo accepted the Vice Chair for Clinical Affairs post with the promotion earlier in the year of Dr. Gordon Carrto CMO for Banner – UMC Tucson and South. Dr. Phil Factor accepted additional responsibilities as Vice Chair for Faculty Affairs in addition to his role as Vice Chair for Quality & Safety. And Dr. Laura Meinke agreed to head the Vice Chair of Education Office on an interim basis as we start a search to replace Dr. Ken Knox who took Lu Martinez, DOM education director, with him this month to run the Faculty Affairs Office at the UA College of Medicine – Phoenix. Congratulations.

With respect to our Education mission, we added a Physician Scientist Track for our residency programs and worked toward a Primary Care Track in Internal Medicine as well as explored a merger of the Internal Medicine Residency Programs at the Tucson and South Campuses. South Campus resident Dr. Jessica August was named American College of Physicians – Arizona Chapter Resident of the Year and three Pulmonary and Critical Care fellows—Drs. Huthayfa Ateeli, Naser Mahmoud and Muna Omar—won the National CHEST Competition at the American College of Chest Physicians annual meeting. Kudos to you all.

Our Vice Chair for Research, Dr. Jil Tardiff helped launch several new initiatives and events, including a Fellows Retreat, the monthly DOM Research Seminar Series, the upcoming inaugural PI Poster Sessions (Jan. 17, 2017, in Kiewit Auditorium) and grant review and incentive programs for junior faculty. She also oversaw development of a new Research section for our website, which was completely redesigned this year, too, with numerous new features to spotlight innovative work being done in our Department.
As I mentioned in the last newsletter, research awards and publication for our faculty were through the roof in 2016. UANews notes in an article below that the “UA ranked in the Top 25 for Research Funding” this year by the National Science Foundation. Also below, you can see links to more than 225 published papers by our faculty, fellows and residents on advanced research achieved in our Department.

And recruitment success meant many new faces — including new division chiefs Drs. Liz Connick (Infectious Diseases), Larry Mandarino (Endocrinology), and Julie Bauman (Hematology-Oncology) as well as interim chiefs Steve Goldschmidt (Gastroenterology) and Sai Parthasarathy (Pulmonary) — and expanded programs across our 13 divisions. I’m so pleased to be able to say you can add a 14th in 2017. My good friends, Wake Forest’s Drs. Gene Bleecker and Deb Meyers (pictured on left) agreed last week to lead as co-chiefs our new Division of Genetics, Genomics and Precision Medicine as well as be co-directors of a new section in the UA Center for Applied Genetics and Genomic Medicine.

I’m happy to provide you more past and future recruits (and other achievements) in my full "2016 Year-in-Review" (click here). For the present, let’s resolve to continue the excellent pace we set in 2016 in moving the ball forward for the benefit of our colleagues, our fellows, our residents, our students and our patients. Give yourselves a pat on the back. Happy Holidays!

Monica Kraft, MD
Robert & Irene Flinn Professor of Medicine
Chair, Department of Medicine
Associate Director, UA Health Sciences Asthma & Airway Disease Research Center
University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson

UPCOMING EVENTS

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Surgery’s Leigh Neumayer Named Interim Senior VP for Health Sciences

UA President Ann Weaver Hart named UA Surgery Department Chair Dr. Leigh A. Neumayer as interim senior vice president for health sciences. Her appointment is effective Jan. 1, 2017, following Dr. Joe G.N. "Skip" Garcia’s decision to resign his administrative role and step back to faculty. A world-renowned pulmonologist and physician-scientist on the genomics of lung disease and prevention and treatment of inflammatory lung injury, Dr. Garcia recruited her from the University of Utah in 2014.

UA, Banner – UMC Celebrate Record-Breaking Year for Kidney Transplants

With a year-to-date total of 108 kidney transplants, the multidisciplinary team of surgeons and transplants specialists with the UA Departments of Surgery and Nephrology—as well as numerous others who support the ongoing collaborative effort including nurses, social workers, pharmacists, nutritionists and lab staff—celebrated the record achievement Nov. 29 at Banner – University Medical Center Tucson...
Dr. Knox Named Faculty Affairs Associate Dean at COM – Phoenix
A faculty member at the UA College of Medicine – Tucson since 2008 and chief of the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine since 2010, Dr. Ken Knox takes his talents to the expanding UA College of Medicine – Phoenix campus. Dr. Sai Parthasarathy was named interim pulmonary chief, while Dr. Laura Meinke manages the Vice Chair for Education Office. Lu Martinez, DOM education director, accepted a post as assistant dean, faculty affairs and development, COM – Phoenix...

RESEARCH
See Photos, Video on DOM Research Seminars, PMI Town Hall, New Sleep Center Open House
Excellent turnout for recent DOM academic events includes the last two Research Seminar Series lectures with Drs. Cristine Berry, Larry Mandarino (Dec. 8), Louise Hecker and Sai Parthasarathy (Nov. 10); the DOM Precision Medicine Town Hall, Dec. 7; and an open house for the new UA Health Sciences Center for Sleep and Circadian Sciences, Dec. 2. See photo galleries and video links to archived webcasts...

DOM Physicians, Investigators Prolific in 2016
With topics ranging from progesterone receptor blocking in breast cancer to epidural corticosteroid injections for radiculopathy and spinal stenosis, authors from the UA Department of Medicine—whether faculty-physicians, fellows, residents, post-docs or students interested in internal medicine—were very busy in the latter half of 2016. Articles, case studies and more made it into publication in the New England Journal of Medicine to the British Medical Journal...
RESEARCH

Farness, Founders Lectures Focus on Fungi, Imaging
Mayo Clinic’s Dr. Janis Blair gives Farness keynote on Valley Fever and transplant complications, while Founders Day headliner Dr. Art Gmitro talks about advances and innovation in medical imaging spearheaded at the UA Health Sciences. See a photo gallery and archived video for each lecture...

FACULTY

DOM Leadership Keep 2016 Academic Presses Rolling
Adding to published work of junior faculty, fellows and resident physicians posted recently, investigators in leadership spots in the UA Department of Medicine take credit for 100-plus additional articles this year. Topics range from asthma to HIV to kissing bugs to osteoarthritis to lung cancer. Read about advances in our understanding of complex diseases and therapies to address them...

Top Docs Grab Ink Throughout 2016 in Tucson Lifestyle
Dr. John Cunningham isn’t the only UA faculty-physician to garner ink in Tucson Lifestyle (see Gastroenterology item below). Read about others who appeared in the magazine this year, including integrative medicine pioneer Dr. Andrew Weil, endocrinologist and nutritionist Dr. Craig Stump, genomics and pulmonology specialist Dr. Ken Ramos and cardiologist and CPR pioneer Dr. Gordon Ewy...

EDUCATION

Students, Mentors Sought for CLARION Case Contest
The UA Health Sciences will host its second annual Local CLARION Interprofessional Case Competition on Feb. 28, 2017. Event organizers are not only looking for teams to compete, but also mentors to assist in their preparations. The deadline for student competitors and faculty mentors is Jan. 18, 2017. See results and photos from last year’s competition...
IN OTHER NEWS

Cardiology

On Dec. 14, Dr. Lee Ryan, professor and department chair, UA College of Science, Department of Psychology, and Dr. Nancy Sweitzer, professor, chief of cardiology and director of the UA Sarver Heart Center, will present a community lecture as part of Sarver Heart Center’s 30th Anniversary Lecture Series. The talk, "Thinking from the Heart,” will focus on heart disease, memory and cognition...

Endocrinology

Battling childhood obesity and early onset Type 2 diabetes one bite at a time is the theme of the next Endocrinology Grand Rounds lecture Tuesday, Dec. 13, 3-4 p.m., UAHS Room 5403, with speaker Dr. Melanie Hingle, a registered dietitian and assistant professor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the UA College of Agriculture and Life Sciences...

Learn how to “feed your genome” at this UA Nutritional Sciences Department annual conference, Feb. 22-24, 2017, with international speakers focused on nutrition and precision health. The opening night dinner recognizes Tucson’s UNESCO City of Gastronomy designation and features Gene Smart Diet and The Rewired Brain author Dr. Ski Chilton and an international lineup of speakers...
**Gastroenterology**

Tucson TV anchor **Craig Thomas** shared his personal experience with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) in an interview with UA Division of Gastroenterology’s **Dr. Sasha Taleban**, director of our IBD Program, in recognition of Crohn’s & Colitis Awareness Week, Dec. 1-7. See the broadcast and learn more about how patients can find therapies and support to reduce the embarrassing affliction’s burden…

Kudos to **Dr. John Cunningham**, a UA professor in the Division of Gastroenterology and the Samuel and Winnifred “Quiggy” Witt Endowed Chair in Medicine, who is featured in **Tucson Lifestyle**’s November issue. Representing Banner – UMC, he’s one of three local gastroenterologists and a nutritionist interviewed for an “In Health” article, titled “Gut Check,” on digestive ailments and available treatments…

**Geriatrics**

The UA Center on Aging’s **Lisa M. O’Neill**, **Dr. Janko Nikolich-Žugich**, and **Rachel Peterson** made the news recently on three separate topics. O’Neill is part of a WalletHub survey of state-by-state rankings elder abuse protections, Dr. Nikolich-Žugich was named an officer of the Gerontological Society of America, and Petersen trained community health workers on mental health and hearing loss in the elderly…

**Infectious Diseases**

UA Assistant Professor **Dr. Maggie Pitts** analyzes how gender affects how people perceive their sexual health responsibilities in an article that appears in the **Health Communications** journal on what college males thought of the HPV vaccine. Nine focus groups with 84 college-age males were surveyed in the study four years after the vaccine’s approval…

December 2016
Infectious Diseases

We are not blank slates with regard to how susceptible we are to emerging strains of flu virus, researchers from the University of Arizona and UCLA have discovered. Turns out, your birth year can predict your odds in a flu pandemic. These findings could provide information relevant for the development of a universal flu vaccine...

Just in time for its 20th anniversary, the UA Valley Fever Center for Excellence unveiled its redesigned website, replete with new features designed for the public and health-care professionals. The launch coincided with Valley Fever Awareness Week, Nov. 12-20, the 21st Annual Farness Lecture by Mayo Clinic infectious diseases specialist Dr. Janis E. Blair, and a new media resources webpage from UANews...

Integrative Medicine

Banner – UMC’s $400 million hospital tower and $100 million outpatient center, evolution of UA Center for Integrative Medicine’s Dr. Andrew Weil from health guru to brand showman, and the confluence of big data and health care with Cyverse’s second $50 million NSF grant are among top stories of the year in BizTucson magazine. Others spotlight Tech Launch, COM – Phoenix Biomedical Sciences Partnership Building, diabetes, cancer and precision medicine research funding, and a Sarver Family legacy...

PACCS

A team led by Dr. Michelle Perfect, associate professor in the UA College of Education’s Department of Disability and Psychoeducational Studies and a collaborator with the UA Health Sciences Center for Sleep and Circadian Sciences, has been awarded a $2 million grant to study the impact of sleep and daily routines on care for youths with Type 1 diabetes...
The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation will offer a free webinar, at 11 a.m., Wednesday, Dec. 14, on “Anti-Inflammatory Medications” as part of its PFF Disease Education Webinar Series. Dr. David J. Lederer, co-director of the New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University Interstitial Lung Disease Program—a PFF Care Center Network site like Banner – UMC Tucson. Prior webinars also are available for viewing…

More Headlines...

“UA Psychologist Earns Humboldt Research Award for Work on Depression”


“UA Ranked in Top 25 for Research Funding by NSF”

“No Ifs, Ands, or ‘Butts:’ UA’s Dr. Judith Gordon Developing New Program to Boost Smokers’ Efforts to Quit Tobacco”

“UA to Launch First-of-Its-Kind Online Science Academy”

“‘60 Minutes’ Airs Spotlight on Banner Alzheimer’s Research, Clinical Trial”

“Modern Hunter-Gatherers Show Value of Exercise for Heart Healthy Lifestyle”

“UA Receives $1.5 Million to Study Cancer in Firefighters”

“UA Steele Children’s Research Center Receives $1.73M Grant to Explore Triggers of Autoimmune Disease”

“UA Drug Licensed to Firm to Treat Canine Cancer”

“UA Public Health Professor Awarded Fulbright Scholarship to Nigeria for HIV Prevention Research”