

July 1, 2020

Dear Faculty, Staff and Learners of the UNM School of Medicine,

I am honored to have been asked to serve as Interim Dean of the UNM School of Medicine during our transition through the in-progress search for a new Executive Vice President for UNM Health Sciences, followed by the search for a permanent Dean of the School of Medicine.

I remember doing a psychiatry rotation here in the fall of 1983. I recall marveling at the blueness of the New Mexico sky. Who would have thought then that seven years later, I would return to the very same building where I did that rotation, but as a junior faculty member in Family and Community Medicine. My return to UNM followed residency at Louisiana State University HSC, a faculty development fellowship at University of California San Francisco, and time on the Family Medicine faculty at Michigan State University.

I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunities I have had to care for patients, teach, do scholarly work and perform community service while building a life here in the Land of Enchantment. Both of my daughters are born and raised New Mexicans and I couldn't be prouder of them.

These past few months have been some of the most difficult many of us have faced in our careers. Your strength, agility, humanity and voices continue to inspire and humble me every day. We have and must continue to pull together to educate our learners, provide the best possible care for our patients, continue our vital research, honor our diversity and support one another while we serve our communities.

More challenging times are ahead, but so too are hopeful ones - if we are willing to have the hard conversations and engage in the work ahead of us.

The worldwide pandemic of COVID-19 and the critical importance of addressing chronic racial injustices have opened our eyes to the work we need to continue to do to create health equity in our community and in our world. What I do know is that racism is a public health issue and that we must practice anti-racism.

Our mission is to improve the health of everyone. We must find and create ways to dismantle racism, bigotry, discrimination and hate just as fiercely as we find and create ways to heal any other disease. I am committed to listening, learning and acting. I may ask a lot of questions along the way and I appreciate the opportunities to collaborate and grow together. I am pleased to be co-convening the HSC anti-racism curriculum committee under the leadership of Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Dr. Valerie Romero-Leggott and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. Amy Levi. I welcome your insights, input and engagement.

I will meet (Zoom) with as many of you as I can over the next 2-3 months (department faculty meetings, groups of residents and students, SOM staff meetings, health system leadership, etc.) to hear your ideas and thoughts about all of our missions and about the ways we can create equity and connect with main campus and our community.

I want to say a heartfelt "thank you" to Dr. Paul Roth both personally and on behalf of all of us. It has been a privilege to work with him as a faculty member, chair and EVD. Dr. Roth's career at the School of Medicine has been in service to the citizens and communities of New Mexico and I know that will not stop after he retires. He will continue to educate the next generation as a learning community mentor for students. Dr. Roth has the heart and mind of a teacher. How lucky the next generation of docs will be to have him to personally guide them.

This summer, as we cautiously begin to come back together in small ways (honoring safe practices and guidance) and enter into the next phase of our communal lives and work, we will have successes, problems to solve and profound opportunities to learn and grow. I am confident that together, and with

respect for one another, we will succeed in keeping each other safe while keeping our remarkable School of Medicine moving forward during this time of transition.

It is a great honor and a challenge of the best sort to lead with you during this transition. An institution is the collective “we” working together toward the mission about which we care so deeply. To remind us:

Mission Statement

The mission of The University of New Mexico School of Medicine is to advance the health of all New Mexicans by educating and increasing the diversity of health professionals, leaders and scientists; providing outstanding and compassionate medical care; advocating for the health of all New Mexicans and pursuing new knowledge and excellence of practice.

Vision Statement

The vision of The University of New Mexico School of Medicine is to be a transformative community where students become leaders in the delivery of excellent and compassionate health care, partners in the crafting of health policy, and champions of public health; where leaders are lifelong learners; where knowledge and discovery encompass the human experience and are applied to healing and promoting the well-being of our state’s people; where scientists, health care providers, and the public collaborate to translate research into real health benefits; where achieving health and health care equality is a common goal; and where diversity is our foremost strength.

Best to all of you,



Martha Cole McGrew, MD

Interim Dean

Executive Vice Dean, The University of New Mexico School of Medicine
Professor, Family and Community Medicine