

IN TOUCH

An update from the dean of The University of Texas Medical School at Houston

September 30, 2008

Dear Alumni, Students, Parents,
and Friends,

I hope you all have had an enjoyable summer. The pace has been anything but relaxed at the Medical School. We have continued our impressive momentum over the summer and are looking forward to a great school year.

Of course, we were waylaid a bit with Hurricane Ike, which devastated much of the Texas coast and crippled the Houston area. I am pleased to report that our facilities weathered the storm quite well and the teamwork that I saw from our students, fellows, residents, staff, and faculty was amazing. You can be proud of how your school stepped up to help the ill and injured of our area and never gave up. We will continue to help our sister institution by “adopting” some students, residents, and fellows of The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, as they work to restore their facilities and achieve their missions.

Back at home, our incoming students are outstanding. You may remember we have increased our class size to 230 to help prepare for a projected national shortage of physicians. The class average for GPA is 3.7, and the MCAT is 30. These are great young people who can go to any medical school. What makes



Dean Giuseppe Colasurdo, M.D.



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS

MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

A part of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston



Dean Giuseppe Colasurdo presents the Betty Murphy Award — honoring those who stand up for what is right and who remain objective of life outside of studying — to Dallas Stobaugh, left.

Below, incoming students recite the Oath of Hippocrates at the white coat ceremony.



them special is that they are a great fit with our Medical School, which is known for its collegiality and friendliness.

I had the best opportunity to see our Medical School's personality in play at the Student Retreat last month. It was my first retreat, and I must admit, it lived up to my heightened expectations. I had the pleasure of participating in one of the live skits – and everyone had a great time. The retreat shows us how talented these students are – beyond their chosen profession of medicine. They are dancers, entertainers, musicians – the second-year class really did a terrific job putting on this program for the entering first-years.



Dr. Larry Kaiser

I also had the pleasure of welcoming the new students at first-year orientation and then helping them don their white coats for the first time at our annual white coat ceremony. I continue to be impressed by our students' knowledge and enthusiasm – working together we will accomplish our primary goal of producing great physicians.

This also has been a time of transition for our Health Science Center leadership, as I am sure you are aware Dr. Larry Kaiser is our new president, replacing Dr. James Willerson, who took the role of president at the Texas Heart Institute. Dr. Kaiser has already visited the Medical School, meeting with various groups here, including a town hall meeting last month. He has proven that he will be hands-on and involved in this Medical School, and he has outlined priorities, including promoting collaboration among the schools and pursuing philanthropic opportunities. He brings great energy and interest to the Medical School, and we are fortunate that he is here. I would like to take this moment to thank Dr. Willerson for his dedicated leadership to the Health Science Center and Medical School – I am pleased that he is

maintaining a faculty appointment here. Dr. Kaiser also has a faculty appointment in the Department of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery. In fact, he had his first case just a couple of weeks in to the job.



Dr. William Donovan

We also have had leadership changes within our Medical School departments. Two of our founding department chairs, Dr. Richard Ruiz, ophthalmology, and Dr. William Donovan, physical medicine and rehabilitation, stepped down as chairs at the end of the summer. They both created strong departments, and I appreciate their dedication to this school. Searches have been initiated to fill these vacancies. Dr. Carin Hagberg, formerly the interim chair of anesthesiology, was named permanent chair effective July 1. I appreciate our chairs' leadership, vision, and promotion of our medical school's values throughout their departments.



Dr. Carin Hagberg

Regarding philanthropy, I am happy to report some preliminary results of our 1,000 x 500 Campaign for Scholarships. Prior to this initiative, we had an alumni giving rate of 1 percent. Thanks to the efforts of our development staff and the generosity of our alumni and friends, we have more than 4 percent of alumni participating. That is a great increase in a short amount of time. To become a part of this campaign to help deserving students pay for medical school, please see www.utmshalumni.org. There you also will find a list of supporters and the top 10 classes in terms of participation rate.

I am pleased to let you know that our physician practice plan, which includes our UT Physician clinics and our work with the Harris County Hospital District, has posted a positive margin for the end of this fiscal year. With more than 700 physicians in 80 specialties, our UT Physicians practice has experts suited to meet your needs and conditions. More than that, we promise individualized care. Please call 1.888.4UT.DOCS or see the newly redone Web site, www.utphysicians.com for more information.

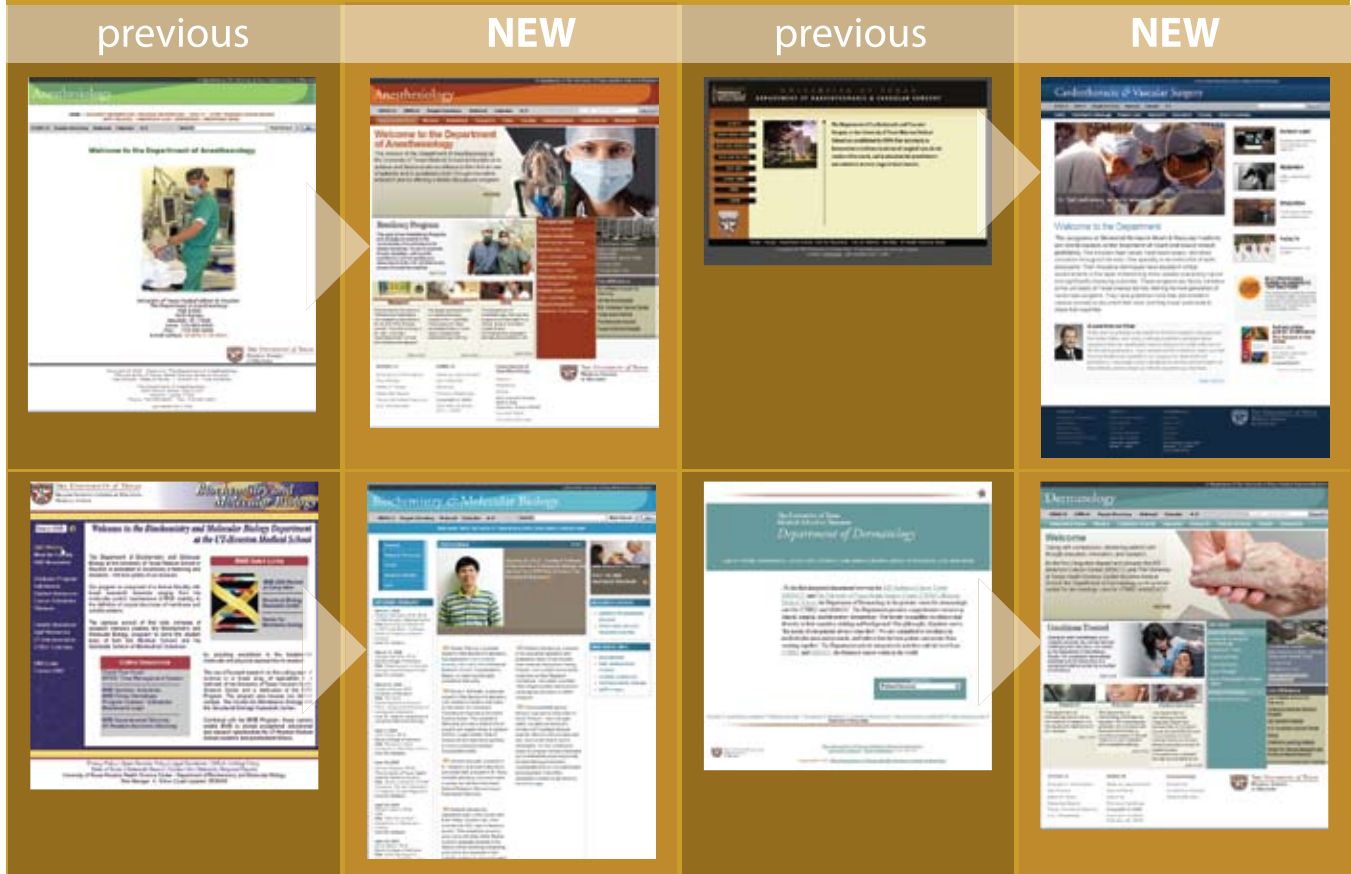


Dr. Richard Ruiz, far right, is congratulated by grandson Ricky Ruiz and daughter Roseanne Ruiz at a reception honoring his retirement as the founding chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences.

If you have not done so lately, I would encourage you also to check out the Medical School's Web site, <http://med.uth.tmc.edu>. As of July 1, each of our 23 departments debuted an updated Web site, and I think you will be happy with the results (see preview on next page).

Updating and refreshing the content of our Web site was step one in what I hope will be a long-term marketing campaign for the Medical School and UT Physicians. Too many times we are told that we are

Sampling of New UT Medical Department Web Site Updates



not known, or that we are confused with another UT medical school. I am proud of this school and its accomplishments, and I want our community to recognize us for what we have become. To this end, you will see and hear more about us, and I welcome your input in how we can further promote our image.

Giuseppe Colasurdo, M.D., Dean
 H. Wayne Hightower Distinguished Professor in the Medical Sciences

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