

Dear Colleagues:

If you pause and look back at the last few years of our journey together, you will be astounded by what we have been able to accomplish. Excellence in research and graduate education has already resulted in the University of South Florida being designated as Carnegie Comprehensive Doctoral Research University/Very High Research Activity; one of only 95 public and private universities in the U.S. which have received this elite distinction. Earlier this year, under the leadership of President Judy Genshaft, the University articulated a bold and comprehensive strategic plan to continue our ascendancy towards greatness and seek an invitation to become a member of the Association of American Universities. We, at USF Health are convinced that as in the past, we will play a defining role in the accomplishment of this vision. As such, under the tutelage of Dr. Steve Klasko, Vice President USF Health and Dean, College of Medicine, and in partnership with Drs. Patricia Burns (Dean, College of Nursing) and Donna Petersen (Dean, College of Public Health), we have initiated the implementation of a USF Health-wide plan which is aimed towards continued enhancement of our research capacity and further improvement in our research infrastructure. The recent recruitment/appointment of Dr. Wilbur Milhous from Walter Reed (Associate Dean for Research, COPH), Dr. Kevin Kip from the University of Pittsburgh (Executive Director of Research, CON), and Dr. Patricia Emmanuel (Associate Dean for Clinical Research, COM) are just some of the examples of how we are transforming our research support infrastructure at this Institution. In the current academic year alone, largely due to the beneficence of our donors, we have been able to establish much need state-of-the-art core facilities in Advanced Microscopy & Cell Imaging, Flow Cytometry and Cell Sorting, Advanced Laboratory for Cardiovascular Imaging, Behavior and Telemetry, Biostatistics, etc. Our goal for next academic year is to establish a world-class outpatient clinical research center on our North campus and to continue to enhance the existing capacity in the areas of proteomics and genomics. Establishment of an Advanced Neuroimaging center for small and large animals is also on the horizon.

Interdisciplinary translational and clinical research is an extremely important component of our portfolio. Working in partnership with our affiliates, we have established a Clinical and Translational Science Institute which will provide the required infrastructure to create unique and productive nexus between basic and clinical scientists. It is the home for the NIH-funded physician-scientist training program (K30) and the CTSA Planning grant. It is branching out in the areas of evidence-based medicine and health informatics and will soon become a formidable resource for investigators in the University system.

Our graduate and post-doctoral programs continue to thrive. The establishment of many new and innovative Master-level programs and the realignment of our doctoral programs to meet the emerging global needs have been very rewarding. Given the University's global outreach, distance-learning has been a high priority at USF Health. In Fall 2008, the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies in the College of Medicine will begin offering an online Masters program in Medical Sciences and many more are in the pipeline.

Our faculty recruitment efforts have been extremely rewarding. Dr. Robert Pedowitz, a world-class academic surgeon was recruited from the University of California San Diego to lead the Department of Orthopedic Surgery, COM. Similarly, Dr. Clifton Gooch, a renowned neuromuscular specialist, has been recruited from Columbia to lead the Department of Neurology, COM. The Infectious Disease focus in the Department of Global Health, COPH has resulted in the recruitment of two Florida World Class Scholars

(Dr. Thomas Unnasch from UAB and Dr. John Adams from Norte Dame) who join a highly visible and NIH-funded team at this College.

Despite declining NIH funding, our existing faculty have been extremely successful in obtaining new competitive grants from this agency. How competitive are our investigators is perhaps best exemplified by the recent NIH award to Dr. Jeffrey Krischer of \$169 million to study the triggers of juvenile diabetes. This international study will be conducted in four countries and will follow more than 7,800 newborns genetically at risk for type I diabetes. Due to your continued hard work and unprecedented commitment to outstanding interdisciplinary basic, translational, and clinical research, year-to-date extramural funding at USF Health (excluding our affiliate partners) has increased by ~85%; from \$53 million (in FY 06-07) to \$98 million in FY 07-08. Despite the highly competitive funding environment, this upward trend is primarily due to doubling in funding from Federal sources.

We are at a “tipping” point in our relatively young history. Together, we are transforming the culture of this Institution and leading the change in academic medicine in the Nation. Our commitment to excellence is unwavering, our vision is bold, our strategy is comprehensive, and our outlook is global...this is the definition of your USF Health.

Sincerely,

Abdul S. Rao, MD, MA, DPhil
Professor of Surgery & Molecular Medicine
Senior Associate Vice President – USF Health