Dear Colleagues,

In the past few weeks you have seen a number of senior leaders step down from their positions at the College.

I can imagine you are feeling like you are losing friends, colleagues and leaders. Transition is always difficult and it is normal and expected to feel a loss at such news.

I want you to know that we are acutely aware of these departures, and we are working closely with Interim Dean Ken Ramos, MD, PhD, to swiftly address these challenges and ensure that the College remains on sound footing and moving toward its trajectory as a top medical school.

Dean Ramos already has named three interim leaders: Susan Kaib, MD, as Associate Dean for Student Affairs; Glen Fogerty, PhD, as Assistant Dean for Admissions and Paul Boehmer, PhD, as Associate Dean for Research. Chairs are being named in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Psychiatry and Surgery.

Searches are underway for Associate Dean of Research and Chief Diversity Officer. Searches will be launched shortly for an Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs, as well as several other chairs.

Despite all of these quick actions, you may also have heard that the Arizona Medical Association has created a resolution challenging the University of Arizona leadership on its response. We are surprised and disappointed at this resolution, considering that the Association did not reach out to us. We appreciate their interest in the medical school and
we hope they can be better informed before calling the future of the medical school into question.

The UA College of Medicine – Phoenix has such a wonderful culture and drive for excellence that I have no doubt we will find exceptional leaders to fill these positions. While I was on campus recently for commencement, I was reminded of the warm and welcoming spirit of this campus. We want the special qualities of this campus to remain, while we bring in leaders who can contribute to this culture.

Making this medical school great has not been done by one person, but a team. And the team we have in Phoenix has the talent, skills and expertise to continue this mission. We know that together we can get through these challenges and we will come out better for it. And we will be better aligned, stronger and more resilient as we move forward.

One of the biggest concerns I have heard is about the accreditation efforts for this College. As most of you know, we are currently seeking full accreditation and have a site visit with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education set for February 2017. We are communicating closely with LCME about the changes on our campus and feel comfortable that we are on the correct path. Already most of the database and materials have been prepared and we will do all we can to prepare the campus for the on-site visit.

The University of Arizona Health Sciences is very fortunate to have two innovative and excellent medical schools. The College of Medicine – Phoenix is a critical component of UAHS and an integral part of our statewide mission. As the youngest of the five colleges of UAHS, Phoenix has been innovative and creative in training medical students for the future. The potential for this College is boundless and we all can see a great future in Phoenix.

The transitions that are occurring are a natural step in the evolution of the College and an opportunity to advance the College to the next level. We have excelled in the training of medical students and now we must focus on the growth of our research enterprise.

One of my consistent themes is that we all need to do our best work, have broad impact and find real meaning in the work we do. Coming together as teams fuels this on a day-to-day basis. Don’t lose sight of where we are going – instead, join me and Dean Ramos in
the continued growth and advancement of this important College.

As leader of the University of Arizona Health Sciences, I want to personally thank you for all that you have done to create and foster the growth of this exceptional college. We know our College in Phoenix will continue to grow and be a point of pride in our state.

Dean Ramos and I will be scheduling another Town Hall soon as well as some meetings on and off campus.

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Joe G.N. “Skip” Garcia, MD
UA Senior Vice President for Health Sciences
Dr. Merlin K. DuVal Professor of Medicine

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