

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER**  
**The College of Medicine**

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Dear Colleagues,

The University of Tennessee College of Medicine (COM) is in a period of significant change. In the year and a half that I've been Executive Dean we have hired 90 new full time faculty, hired or are on the verge of hiring 7 new Chairs, and replaced the Knoxville and Chattanooga campus Deans. I anticipate that the COM will hire over 100 more new faculty in the coming 2 years. UTMG has moved into the profit column and raised substantial funds. Plans for Clinical variable compensation are being evaluated. We've gone through a Chancellor and will likely see a new Chancellor join us in the next 5 years. All of this rapid change can stress both faculty and leadership. We need to better communicate to weather the changes as a unified COM.

To help do this I, with the aid of COM Associate Deans, plan to address faculty concerns in a monthly column. My goal is to (A) disseminate information and (B) become more knowledgeable and responsive to faculty concerns. I think that dissemination of information is essential to reduce anxiety about where COM is going. With regard to my becoming more knowledgeable, I am not in the day-to-day workings of departments but to make good decisions for COM I need the insight of faculty that define who COM is and can be. As Executive Dean it is also part of my job to be responsive to faculty issues.

How this will work is simple. Faculty send in their concerns, questions, or response to previous columns via e-mail (COM@utm.edu). The Associate Deans and I select what seems to be widespread issues and we consider them in depth – don't be surprised if you hear from us asking for clarification. I then write a column to be e-mailed to all COM faculty which anonymously restates your concern or question and responds as to how COM views and addresses that issue. It would be optimal if we all could sit down and debate the issues face-to-face, but time makes that solution prohibitive.

Joseph Simone, MD, said in his maxims for academic medical centers, "Academic medicine is a noble calling. Despite the problems, it can be the most fulfilling and rewarding of professions, if taken with a sharp eye for reality, a dash of iconoclasm, and a ready sense of humor."<sup>1</sup> I ask that you join with me in identifying and finding solutions for COM with that sense of reality, iconoclasm, and humor. I ask that you join me in taking COM to the next level.

Steve J Schwab, MD  
Executive Dean, College of Medicine

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<sup>1</sup>*Clinical Cancer Research* 1999, 5:2281

The e-mail address to send in concerns, questions and comments to Dr Schwab is COM@utm.edu.