



To Members of the RBHS Community:

As all activities related to our new academic year get into full swing, I would like to welcome new faculty, staff, and students to RBHS. I hope everyone has enjoyed a wonderful summer and I extend my best wishes to you for the coming year.

Much has been achieved since my most recent communication with you last spring; I would like to give you a few examples.

On July 1, 2014, the Rutgers College of Nursing-Newark and New Brunswick merged with the Rutgers School of Nursing-Newark to form the new Rutgers School of Nursing. The unified school, led by William Holzemer, PhD, RN, FAAN, as dean and Susan Salmond, EdD, RN, ANEF, FAAN, as executive vice dean, is poised to serve the people of New Jersey effectively and efficiently and contribute to improving health outcomes through the education and training of nurses and services to communities.

Susan Dolbert, PhD joined the Rutgers University Foundation on Sept. 2nd as vice president for development, RBHS. Dr. Dolbert has significant experience in healthcare fundraising and alumni relations and will lead our efforts in this regard as we begin raising funds to support our five-year strategic plan. She joins us from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington, where she was vice president of development.

Gary Aston-Jones, PhD, an internationally recognized neuroscientist, has been appointed as the inaugural director of the Brain Health Institute (BHI) and will be the Murray and Charlotte Strongwater Endowed Chair in Neuroscience and Brain Health. Dr. Aston-Jones' research interests include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism, addiction, and Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. His appointment is the initial step in enabling BHI, created in 2013 to bring together brain disorder researchers across Rutgers, to expand research in brain science throughout the university. Dr. Aston-Jones will begin on or about December 1, 2014, and will be visiting often between now and then.

Jeffrey Carson, MD and Robert Wieder, MD, PhD, who ably served last year as interim provosts for RBHS, agreed to assume the positions of provost for RBHS-New Brunswick and provost for RBHS-Newark, respectively, effective July 1, 2014. As interim provosts, Drs. Carson and Wieder made great progress in the revision and standardization of the appointment and promotion criteria for faculty across RBHS. Throughout the year, drafts were shared with, and input was provided by, leaders and representatives from each of the RBHS schools, the RBHS Faculty Council, and the faculty at large. In FY 2015, they hope to finalize appointment and promotion criteria and policies and create a faculty handbook, which will include detailed information about faculty tracks, the appointment and promotion process, and criteria. Once approved, the provosts will conduct training and information sessions for department chairs and each school's appointments and promotions committee, then hold open Q&A sessions to which all faculty will be invited. Training and Q&A sessions will be conducted annually in subsequent years.

As provosts, Drs. Carson and Wieder will oversee the appointment and promotion processes for all schools and will review offer letters for new appointments to ensure that tracks and school commitments are appropriate and implemented properly. In FY 2015, the provosts also will establish a faculty mentoring program, which will include new faculty progress and advisory committees, designed to counsel faculty and help them with career development. Finally, the provosts will serve as two of RBHS's three representatives on the Rutgers Promotion Review Committee, as our promotions process integrates with the university's process. Tamara Minko, PhD, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, has kindly agreed to be our third representative.

We also are making progress in our recruitment of other faculty leaders. The search for a director of the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research is at an advanced stage. Searches are well underway for deans for Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, the School of Health Related Professions, and the School of Public Health. Many outstanding applicants have applied. The search committees have narrowed

the list to those to be brought in for “airport interviews,” which have already been held for SPH, reducing the list to those who will be brought to campus for interviews. Airport interviews are imminent for the two other dean searches.

We also have made great progress with our strategic planning efforts. Thanks again to the more than 5,000 members of our community who contributed to the process. We have tentatively identified signature programs, complementary programs, educational initiatives, clinical initiatives, clinical service activities, enabling structures (infrastructure initiatives), and financial and development strategies that will guide us for the next five years. We will present our plan to the Health Affairs Committee of the Rutgers Board of Governors on September 19th. If approved, we plan to post a text version of the plan on our strategic plan website (<http://rbhs-stratplan.rutgers.edu/>) shortly thereafter. A published version should be available later in the fall. Please continue to check our website for announcements.

As our strategic plan is being finalized, we are moving forward with important initiatives. A Robert Wood Johnson Medical School patient access initiative is underway. A consulting firm has been retained to assess ambulatory access, clinical operations, and performance of the Robert Wood Johnson Medical Group. That work has begun, in close consultation with clinical faculty and school administration. We also are negotiating an agreement with Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital that would continue its affiliation as the principal hospital for Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. While negotiations are ongoing, we are optimistic that an agreement will be finalized soon that will enable us to enhance and strengthen our clinical and academic programs, as well as better support the hospital’s clinical mission.

Recently, I had the “pleasure” of participating in *two* ALS ice bucket challenges (see <http://rbhs.rutgers.edu/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJJV3RMXVhw> for videos). I was happy to participate and contribute to this cause. Importantly, it also gave me a chance to encourage everyone to write to federal legislative representatives, reminding them of the impact of research funding cuts, delaying access to cures. I encouraged viewers to ask their congressmen and senators to increase research funding, which is badly needed to support basic and clinical research for all diseases and our health-related challenges. Please consider doing the same!

Finally, I would like to congratulate Hanaa Hamdi, PhD, previously assistant professor, Department of Family Medicine, New Jersey Medical School, for her appointment in Newark Mayor Ras Baraka’s administration as the city’s health and human services director. This is a great match for Dr. Hamdi’s skills and interests, which include research on the impact of social and structural exposures on health outcomes, and provides an excellent example to all of us of the contributions we can make to our communities.

I’m looking forward to a great year. Thanks for your continued support and contributions to the significant progress RBHS is making!

Brian L. Strom, MD, MPH
Chancellor, Rutgers Biomedical & Health Sciences
chancellor@rhbs.rutgers.edu
September 16, 2014