Investing in Learning and Discovery

I recently had occasion to spend some time talking with one of our newest faculty members, neuroscientist Farran Briggs, PhD, about her research. A young investigator who has already established a promising track record, Dr. Briggs conveys that combination of creative curiosity, scientific rigor, and excitement about her work that makes for a great investigator and an outstanding teacher and mentor for our students.

Dr. Briggs is one of 12 top-notch scientists we have brought to DMS in the past year. Our strategy is to grow our research enterprise smartly by targeting our faculty recruitment in areas where we are already strong, but could be outstanding with a few more primary investigators. To that end, we’ve identified cancer, neuroscience, inflammation/immunity, bioinformatics, psychiatry, and health care delivery science as areas for immediate investment. Our new recruits are scientists who are successful in their own right, bringing with them millions of dollars in grant funding. It speaks highly of their regard for DMS that they want to be part of our team.

Led by our Senior Associate Dean for Research, Duane Compton, PhD, we are also working to leverage our cross-institutional research partnerships with Dartmouth College, Thayer, and Tuck, and with Dartmouth-Hitchcock, the VA Hospital, and other regional care providers. SYNERGY—the Dartmouth Center for Clinical and Translational Science, our nanotechnology collaboration with Thayer School of Engineering and Norris Cotton Cancer Center, the National Center for PTSD based at the VA, the Advanced Surgery Center for Translational Research currently under construction on the DHMC campus, and our three Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence are just a few examples of the exciting interdisciplinary research efforts now underway.

These and other research initiatives have increased DMS’s research portfolio from $128 million to $137 million in the last year.

Our research enterprise is fundamental to Dartmouth Medical School’s mission of improving the lives of the people we serve through innovations in learning, discovery, and teaching. We do that by creating an extraordinary intellectual home for our faculty and students. By building a high-performing research enterprise we also provide the highest quality graduate programs for our MD students, graduate students, and post-docs, preparing true pioneers who will push the frontiers of innovation. I am pleased that we are well on our way.
The DMS Board of Overseers plays an important advisory role in working with me and the leadership team to guide the strategic direction of DMS. Led by Bill Helman, DC ’80, a trustee of Dartmouth College and Dartmouth-Hitchcock, the Board of Overseers is a diverse group of people who lend their expertise, counsel, and philanthropic leadership to DMS. As we continue to expand our Board and leverage its individual and collective strengths, I am pleased to welcome four new members:

- **Ross A. Jaffe, MD**, DC ’80, is co-founder and managing director of Versant Ventures, a leading healthcare-focused venture capital firm;
- **Susan E. Lynch, MD**, is a pediatric lipid specialist and First Lady of New Hampshire, who is widely recognized for her advocacy for the state’s children;
- **John L. (Launny) Steffens, DC ’63**, is the founder of Spring Mountain Capital, LP, an alternative investment firm in New York City;
- **Douglas E. Williamson, MD**, DC ’85, DMS ’93, is the second of three generations of Williamson family Dartmouth graduates and head of maternal and child health at Alice Peck Day Hospital in Lebanon, NH.

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**Curriculum Redesign**

Our Curriculum Redesign Task Force has embraced the exciting and complex challenge of developing a new and innovative curriculum that will prepare our students not only to be excellent clinicians, but to be leaders of change in health care.

While we are still early in this process, some fundamental parameters are already taking shape. The new curriculum will enable our students to earn both an MD and a master’s degree in leadership within the standard four-year timeframe of a traditional MD degree. Within the master’s track, they will choose from one of several possible areas of concentration, such as population health, health care delivery science, or global health.

Another key element of the new curriculum will be the integration of the basic sciences currently taught in years one and two with the clinical sciences taught in years three and four. We believe learning will be more powerful and more efficient by bringing fundamental physiology and patho-physiology together with clinical correlations in a systems perspective. This will get students out of the classroom and into clinical learning sites sooner and allow for inclusion of the master’s degree content as well.

In reshaping our curriculum, we also seek to preserve and leverage DMS’s unique strengths. These include our small class size, the quality of our teaching, the access our students have to our faculty, and our world-renowned expertise and leadership in process improvement and health care delivery science.
Recognitions and Awards

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION EXTENDS SUPPORT FOR DARTMOUTH ATLAS OF HEALTH CARE
For 30 years, the groundbreaking research of the Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care has revealed important insights into unwarranted variation in the delivery of health care. Since 1994, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has been a critical partner, providing more than $14 million in grant funding for this important work. Given the longitudinal nature of much the Atlas's research, RWJF's steadfast commitment has been of vital importance to the Atlas’s success. The Foundation recently extended its support with an additional $2.7 million award.

ROMERO-SANDOVAL NAMED RITA ALLEN SCHOLAR
The Rita Allen Foundation has selected DMS’s E. Alfonso Romero-Sandoval, PhD, as one of only two recipients of its prestigious 2011 Scholars in Pain award. This three-year, $150,000 scholarship is awarded to early-career investigators who have shown significant achievement or extraordinary promise in basic science research in pain, and gives awardees wide latitude in applying the funds to advance their research. An assistant professor of anesthesiology and of pharmacology/toxicology, Dr. Romero-Sandoval’s research is focused on the central nervous system mechanisms underlying chronic pain.

DMS AWARDED $11 MILLION GRANT FOR CENTER OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH EXCELLENCE
With computational geneticist Jason Moore, PhD, as principal investigator, DMS has received an $11 million grant to establish an NIH Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) in quantitative biology. The third COBRE based at DMS, the new center will lead a network of northern New England institutions in recruiting, training, and supporting early-career quantitative biologists to teach and conduct research into the ways that genes and the environment work together to trigger and prevent disease.

WEINSTEIN ELECTED TO INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE
Dr. James N. Weinstein, chief executive officer of Dartmouth-Hitchcock and the Peggy Y. Thomson Chair in the Clinical Evaluative Sciences at DMS, has been elected to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies of Sciences. An internationally renowned spine surgeon and health services researcher, Weinstein joins 12 other current and former Dartmouth faculty members of the prestigious Institute.

“The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s steadfast commitment has been of vital importance to the Atlas’s success.”

E. Alfonso Romero-Sandoval, PhD

Jason Moore, PhD

James N. Weinstein, DO, MS
CREATE LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP
Leadership is an exercise in language that brings forth a radically new future. We will create leaders who exercise leadership effectively as their natural self-expression. Only by way of the language of leadership can we grow ourselves, each and every day, to acquire the insights and wisdom to tackle the world's problems.

STUDENTS AND FACULTY FIRST
Every day, we work together to enrich people's lives through learning, discovering, and healing. The catalyst for serving others must be embodied in our faculty–student relationships. We will make every effort to continue recruiting and retaining the very best students and faculty to our campus.

RECAST OUR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH MISSIONS
Our commitment to the advancement of learning and discovery must be reflected in programs that are cutting-edge, forward-thinking, and highly relevant. As we prepare our people for the practice of medicine, research, and teaching, we must also prepare true pioneers who will push the frontiers of innovation.

REACH OUT AND CONNECT PEOPLE
We must create new opportunities to connect people at Dartmouth and around the world so that new partnerships, novel ideas, and imaginative solutions are spawned. In reaching out and connecting with others, we assure a commitment to a purpose that is bigger than ourselves.

WE WIN TOGETHER
People are our most precious asset and teamwork is our winning formula. This ethos will be reflected in our partnership with Dartmouth College, Dartmouth-Hitchcock, the White River Junction VA Medical Center, and our partners throughout the region and beyond. This includes the relationships we have with our alumni, donors, and members of the communities we serve.