



## DEAN'S MESSAGE: What's On My Mind

What's on my mind this month is a bold, innovative plan to significantly accelerate the pace and scope of discovery and innovations in the School of Medicine.

Last month we announced a new recruitment initiative, the **Special Trans-Disciplinary Recruitment Award Program (STRAP)**, to attract scores of top scientists to the SOM and to foster research that will lead to important discoveries, breakthroughs and treatments. This plan, the most ambitious recruitment effort in the SOM's more than two centuries of existence, is part of our continuing effort to become one of the top most biomedical research institutions in the nation.

The new program is part of **Vision 2020**, the shared strategic goals established by the SOM and the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS). STRAP specifies that by 2020, we will recruit well-funded teams of scientists at all faculty ranks. We will focus on leading researchers and physician-scientists, who are doing important work in critical areas, including brain disorders, cancer, and cardiovascular-metabolic diseases.

To start the process, we provided leaders of the School of Medicine's departments, centers, institutes and programs with extra resources to attract researchers that fit our high standards. We have also hired an external professional search firm to help SOM leaders identify the most highly qualified candidates.

We also believe the initiative will lead to more collaborative research between scientists at the School of Medicine, across the campus, and throughout the University System of Maryland.

STRAP is just one way in which we are working to advance the School of Medicine. As you may know, The University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB), working collaboratively with the SOM, is in the midst of building a 450,000-square foot research facility on West Baltimore Street. This cutting edge facility is scheduled for completion by the end of next year. The new building will house some of the most advanced, sophisticated laboratories and medical research technology in the country.

Over the past decade, we have seen extraordinary growth in our research programs, and our School of Medicine has become a formidable biomedical research enterprise. With more than \$400 million in total extramural research funding last year, we now rank among the top research institutions nationally. With these new and sophisticated facilities, as well as the recruitment of new researchers and physician-scientists, we are ready to take the next step in our upward trajectory.

We plan to have our newest faculty focus particularly on research in areas in which the need is greatest. These include non-communicable diseases that cause the highest level of morbidity, mortality and disability. According to the World Health Organization, non-communicable diseases, including brain disorders, cardiovascular disorders, and cancer account for nearly 70 percent of all deaths worldwide.

However, we will also seek to strengthen ourselves in areas in which we already have a robust research presence. Overall the SOM has a wide range of impressive research accomplishments, which grow larger every day. More on these accomplishments can be found in this month's center spread.

In the face of many challenges over the past decade, we have been relentless in pursuing our goals to improve our SOM. With our new institutes and centers, an impressive new facility, and our ambitious recruitment initiative, we expect to continue our aggressive trajectory, and to ultimately have a major impact on the most serious and prevalent diseases that cause enormous misery in our community, our country, and our world.

In the relentless pursuit of excellence, I am

Sincerely yours,

E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA  
Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland  
John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine



### Point of Pride

In a milestone that was years in the making, a vaccine to prevent cholera, invented and developed by researchers at the University of Maryland School of Medicine's Center for Vaccine Development, was approved in June 2016 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The vaccine, Vaxchora, is the only approved vaccine in the U.S. for protection against cholera.

This makes us proud!



## Esteemed Faculty Members Honored with Endowed Professorships

TWO INVESTITURE CEREMONIES were held in June to recognize the installment of new endowed professors at the School of Medicine. The first honored cardiothoracic surgeon **Joseph Friedberg, MD**, as the Charles Reid Edwards, MD Professor of Surgery. The second honored **Christopher Plowe, MD, MPH, FASTMH**, Founding Director of the Institute for Global Health and Director of the Division of Malaria Research as the Frank M. Calia Professor of Medicine.

"The University of Maryland School of Medicine ranks in the top tier of medical schools nationally, and it has built an international reputation for clinical and research excellence," said **E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA**, Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean of the School of Medicine. "Outstanding faculty members are critical to maintaining our standing in the top tier of medical schools nationwide. Endowed professorships provide our excellent faculty members with critical resources needed to sustain and expand promising research, launch innovative clinical initiatives, and educate and train the physician-scientists of tomorrow."

Dr. Friedberg's journey to being named the first Charles Reid Edwards, MD Professor of Surgery was a circuitous one, with many twists and turns and unintended fortuitous decisions that led him to a profession he loves. Despite initially deciding he would never be a surgeon like his father, he ultimately realized the admiration he had for

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Dean Reece and Dr. Stephen Bartlett with Dr. Friedberg



# SOM LAUNCHES UNPRECEDENTED INITIATIVE TO Recruit Top Scientists

**Goal** is to attract Well-Funded Research Teams to Occupy New Research Facility and to **focus** on Most Critical and Deadly Diseases

**U**niversity of Maryland School of Medicine (UM SOM) Dean E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, announced on July 26, 2016 the launch of a bold, new and unprecedented faculty recruitment initiative, the **Special Trans-Disciplinary Recruitment Award Program (STRAP)**, designed to attract top scientists to the School and to significantly catalyze UM SOM's focus on accelerating discoveries, cures and therapeutics for the most serious diseases that cause morbidity, mortality, and disability.

The program, announced by Dean Reece in a special session of the School's Executive Committee Meeting is the most significant and ambitious effort to recruit scientists in the School's nearly 210-year old history. It signifies an aggressive move by the UM SOM to rise to the top-most echelon of leading biomedical research institutions in the nation.

The new program is part of **Vision 2020**, the shared strategic goals established by the UM SOM and the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS). STRAP specifies that the UM SOM will recruit

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New SOM Research Building



scores of well-funded teams of scientists at all faculty ranks by the year 2020. In particular, the School will target leading researchers and physician scientists who will help to accelerate breakthrough discoveries in critical areas, including brain disorders, cancer, and cardiovascular-metabolic diseases. This initiative will lead to rich, collaborative research programs across the School, the University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB) campus, and the University of Maryland System, Dean Reece noted.

To address these major disease categories, the components of the new STRAP initiative include engaging the School's academic leaders of departments, centers, institutes and programs with targeted resources to attract and secure leading scientists, at both the senior and mid-levels. This initiative



## Special Trans-Disciplinary Recruitment Award Program (STRAP)



## SOM Ranked Among Top Research Institutions

With more than \$400M in total extramural research funding last year, the School of Medicine now ranks among the top research intensive institutions nationally. Key advances since the UM SOM celebrated its bicentennial in 2007 include:

- Establishment of new individual research centers and institutes focused on the study of genomic sciences; human virology; stem cell biology and regenerative medicine; shock trauma and anesthesiology; biomolecular therapeutics, and global health;
- Extensive research in transplantation leading to breakthroughs in face, kidney and lung transplants;
- Breakthrough development of major vaccines for Ebola, malaria, MERS and cholera, and the start of clinical trials for a new HIV vaccine;
- Creation of new Center for Health and Bioinformatics in collaboration with the University of Maryland, College Park to manage “big data” associated with clinical databases;
- Roll-out of Shared Vision 2020 with the University of Maryland Medical System, establishing benchmark goals for education, research, clinical care and public outreach;
- Launch of SOM annual research symposium “Festival of Science,” and formation of UM SOM Scientific Advisory Council, made up of Nobel Laureates and world-renown National Academy scientists;
- Establishment of new centralized core laboratories to assist departments in conducting broad range of basic science and clinical studies: Center for Innovative Biomedical/ Imaging Resources (CIBR);
- Completion of Maryland Proton Treatment Center, the most advanced form of cancer treatment and the first in the Baltimore-Washington, DC region;
- The National Cancer Institute’s designation of the UM Greenebaum Cancer Center as a “*Comprehensive Cancer Center*.”
- Construction of new SOM Research Building, the largest building and research facility on the UMB campus.

“In the face of many challenges over the past decade, we have been undaunted in purpose and resilient in execution as we achieve our goals to improve the health and wellbeing of our citizens—in the City of Baltimore, the State of Maryland, and around the world,” Dean Reece said. “With new facilities, the addition of expanded teams of leading scientists through our new STRAP initiative, and a multi-disciplinary approach to discovery-based medicine, we expect to make a transformative impact on debilitating and deadly diseases through our discoveries, therapeutics and cures.”

will also leverage an external professional search firm to ensure successful recruitment of the most-qualified candidates.

The School of Medicine and the University are in the midst of the construction of a 450,000 square foot state-of-the art research facility on West Baltimore Street, costing more than \$300M, which is scheduled to be completed before the end of 2017. The new SOM Research Building will house some of the most advanced laboratories and medical research technology found anywhere. Dean Reece pointed out that the new building is a major asset to the School’s research portfolio and will be most appealing to scientists who wish to have a state-of-the-art research facility for conducting discovery-based medicine in a collaborative manner and at a very high level of sophistication.

According to the latest World Health Organization data, non-communicable diseases such as brain disorders, cardiovascular-metabolic diseases, and cancers account for nearly 70 percent of all deaths worldwide. Overall, the leading causes of death have persisted over the past decade. These include heart disease, cancer, stroke, hypertension, and diabetes.

“We are aggressively working to unravel the causes and mechanisms underlying debilitating and deadly diseases, and develop effective therapeutics, vaccines and cures,” said Dean Reece, who is also Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor. “Over the past decade, we have had extraordinary growth in our research programs, eventuating into a formidable biomedical research enterprise. Now, with large, new and sophisticated facilities, as well as the recruitment of expanded teams of leading biomedical scientists and physician-scientists, we are poised to accelerate the trajectory of discovery and innovation in medicine.”

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Esteemed Faculty Members Honored with Endowed Professorships [continued]

his father was inescapable and at his core he wanted to be just like him. With that inspiration, and exposure to a variety of gifted and dedicated mentors, Dr. Friedberg ultimately completed a total of 15 years of medical, surgical and research training at Harvard prior to starting his career as an academic thoracic surgeon. “We were a new Program at the time and I consider him one of the founders of our thoracic surgery practice,” said David Sugarbaker, MD, Professor and Chief, Division of General Thoracic Surgery; Director, Lung Institute; and the Olga Keith Wiess Chair in Surgery, Baylor College of Medicine, who chose Dr. Friedberg as the first Thoracic Track cardiothoracic surgery Fellow at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women’s Hospital. “I knew from the beginning that this individual was going to be a leader.”

After training, Dr. Friedberg spent nearly 20 years as a Professor of Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania and a thoracic surgeon with an international reputation as an expert in the treatment of mesothelioma and other pleural malignancies. Dr. Friedberg founded and directed the University of Pennsylvania Mesothelioma and Pleural Program, the first truly comprehensive program for malignant pleural mesothelioma in the United States. He is continuing his work with mesothelioma patients here at the University of Maryland.

The Charles Reid Edwards Professorship was established through a bequest gift of Dr. and Mrs. Alston Gordon Lanham, in honor of Dr. Edwards. Dr. Lanham was a 1931 graduate of the School of Medicine. Dr. Edwards joined the School as a Clinical Professor of Surgery in 1931, and later became Professor of Surgery and Acting Head of the Department of Surgery from 1948 until 1955.

The son of an Episcopal minister and farmer in South Dakota who dedicated himself to helping Native Americans, Dr. Plowe grew up in a compassionate family environment. He was still in medical school when he went on his first international medical trip, working in Jakarta with Dr. Stephen Hoffman on a cholera treatment project during his summer break.

Dr. Plowe found his niche in the global health arena in the field of malaria research, but his influence in the field of tropical medicine has gone far beyond being one of the world’s foremost experts in malaria. “Like many of us in the world of international health research, our commitment

extends well beyond the confines of our office,” said **Miriam Laufer, MD, MPH**, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Associate Director for Global Health, Institute for Global Health. “I believe that [Dr. Plowe]’s strongest legacy lays here. He has trained over 75 aspiring infectious disease researchers from every corner of the world, focusing on diseases that disproportionately afflict adults and children living in the most resource-limited settings. I would venture to say that in any room of international infectious disease researchers, there is no one more than one or two degrees removed from Chris Plowe.”

The same could be said of **Myron “Mike” Levine, MD, DTPH**, the Simon and Bessie Grollman Distinguished Professor of Medicine and Associate Dean for Global Health, Vaccinology & Infectious Diseases. In his closing remarks, Dr. Plowe paid homage to Dr. Levine, the Founder and former Director of the Center for Vaccine Development. Twenty-four years ago, Dr. Levine showed him a still-under-construction laboratory space and convinced him he could do great things at the University of Maryland. “You had very high expectations of me, and I realize now that, in no small measure, my success can be attributed to my attempts to live up to those high expectations, which certainly exceeded my own.”

The Frank M. Calia Professorship was supported by generous gifts from 74 individual, foundation, and corporate donors specifically to honor Dr. Calia. “On most occasions, endowed professorships are named for the donors who established them,” said Dean Reece. “In this case, this professorship will carry the name of Dr. Frank Calia, a man whose name has become synonymous with academic scholarship at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and whose academic legacy touches all corners of this institution. The financial contributions to establish this endowed professorship were made because of the impact Dr. Calia has made on the lives of students, colleagues, and friends, and as a testament of their love, gratitude, and admiration of him.”

Said Dr. Plowe: “*The leadership of people like Frank Calia and Mike Levine has made Maryland the best place to be. They are both emblematic of the culture of caring and collegiality that exists here. They have been tremendous role models for me and others and have helped set the tone for an organization that treats people the right way.*”



Dr. Calia and Dr. Plowe



Dr. Stephen Davis and Dean Reece with Dr. Plowe

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