



The University of Texas System
Nine Universities. Six Health Institutions. Unlimited Possibilities.

Office of the Chancellor
601 Colorado Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2982
Phone: 512 499 4201 Fax: 512 499 4215

July 22, 2015

Faculty Senate Executive Committee
U. T. M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
1400 Holcombe Boulevard, Unit 412
Houston, TX 77030

Dear Colleagues:

Please accept my appreciation for all that you are doing to support the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and the people that it serves. As I have shared with you in our various meetings, there is a special place in my heart for M.D. Anderson - both as a patient and as Chancellor of The University of Texas System. The M.D. Anderson faculty and staff have propelled this remarkable institution into its position as the premier cancer center in the world. The passion that all members of the M.D. Anderson family have for its mission comes through in every session that I have had on campus.

I want to thank you for the excellent work that you have done in preparing a comprehensive white paper on the status of the institution and opportunities for improvement. Tremendous effort went into this process and it was undertaken with a positive and constructive attitude. Your guidance has been incredibly valuable to Executive Vice Chancellor Greenberg and me. As you know, I have relied upon your work to help shape my own thoughts about priorities for the institution going forward.

As we look to the future, it is clear that a team effort will be required to improve the climate at M.D. Anderson. The executive leadership team must embrace the principles of shared governance, transparency, and support of faculty academic effort. At the same time, the faculty must be an engaged and willing partner in these efforts. Building trust within the organization requires behavior of mutual respect throughout the organization, not just at its leadership levels. We have to overcome a historical misperception that the purpose of the Faculty Senate is to serve as the loyal opposition to the administration. The white paper has begun to change that dynamic - I have witnessed a genuine alignment of interests across the various stakeholder groups. It is my hope that this momentum will carry forward and that the Faculty Senate will become a working partner with the executive leadership team and the division heads in making further institutional progress.

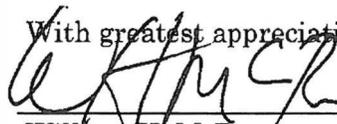
The University of Texas at Arlington
The University of Texas at Austin
The University of Texas at Brownsville
The University of Texas at Dallas
The University of Texas at El Paso
The University of Texas at Permian Basin
The University of Texas at San Antonio
The University of Texas at Tyler
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler

In the proposed new shared governance model, it will be key for all of those involved in decision-making roles to act first and foremost in the interests of the greater good of the institution. While Faculty Senate representatives will bring the much needed and valued perspective of the faculty, as you have learned in the process of developing the white paper, it is difficult to achieve consensus among such a large and diverse group. Governance decisions need to be made in a timely manner and reflect the best collective judgment of the shared governance team. In this context, the Faculty Senators have a duty to represent their constituents, but equally important, they will be acting on behalf of the entire institution. Obviously, there is a difference between advocacy and governance, and the Faculty Senators who serve in a governance capacity must be attentive to this distinction and participate in shared governance for the good of the institution while ensuring that the collective voice of the faculty is heard. They must also honor confidentiality, when necessary, in the deliberative process. Based upon the care taken with the confidentiality of the white paper while it was under development, I am confident that the Faculty Senate representatives can and will adhere to the need to protect sensitive information in their capacity as members of the shared governance team.

In my discussions with various stakeholders, it is clear that all constituents believe that internal communications can be improved at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Clearly, the executive leadership team understands that they have to do a better job in that regard, but I would also charge the Faculty Senate representatives to meet regularly with their constituents in order to make sure that they fully appreciate the range of opinions that are held. The white paper process illustrated that faculty opinion is diverse, and to be effective, the Faculty Senate cannot be seen as representing only one segment of the broad range of opinion.

When meeting with faculty colleagues, it would be helpful if the message from the Faculty Senate representatives was as balanced as possible. As many of the ideas expressed in the white paper are implemented, the Faculty Senate should join in celebrating this progress. Surely, the Faculty Senate can and should take credit for highlighting these issues, but equally important, the leadership should be applauded for taking this excellent counsel and acting upon it.

It has been a privilege for me to get to know you and to learn from our meetings together. Executive Vice Chancellor Greenberg and I are grateful for your candor and your openness to suggestions from us. It is the kind of healthy exchange that we hope to encourage with faculty across the U.T. System and we salute you for being pioneers in that regard. At an even more fundamental level, we are humbled by the important work that you do every day in advancing research and patient care for those facing such daunting illnesses. Our goal is to help you, individually and collectively, to be as effective as possible and we stand ready to support you and M.D. Anderson.

With greatest appreciation,

William H. McRaven
Chancellor

WHM/jbp
cc: Raymond Greenberg, M.D., Ph.D.