

Dear Colleagues:

We write to inform you that Eugene P. Orringer, MD is stepping down from his current role as Executive Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Faculty Development, a change that will be effective November 1, 2009.

As many of you know, Gene has made significant contributions to a number of programs during his tenure in the Dean's office. However, Gene is perhaps best known for his true passion, that of training the next generation of scholars, especially clinical and translational researchers. Throughout his time in the Dean's office, Gene developed and competed successfully for peer-reviewed funding for several key training programs that serve as the foundation for UNC's nationally-recognized career development curriculum.

In May 2008, Gene became Director of the Education, Training and Career Development (ETCD) Core of the CTSA-funded TraCS Institute, and he will continue in this role. The national CTSA consortium recently identified as one of its five key strategic goals: "to provide training and improve career development of clinical and translational scientists." Thus, the ETCD Core has an expanded mission to train a broader audience in the new discipline of translational research. Gene will now be able to devote his full attention to creating innovative training strategies at UNC that cross disciplinary and School boundaries in order to prepare future generations of researchers to conduct interdisciplinary team science. We are delighted that Gene has agreed to accept this challenge and will dedicate his energy and experience to continuing UNC's national leadership role in the training of clinical and translational researchers.

Through his leadership of the ETCD Core, Gene will shape training and career development for many important programs at UNC. The pre-doctoral programs include: the Doris Duke Medical Student Clinical Research Fellowship Program and our NIH-funded MD-PhD and TL1 Programs. Junior faculty development programs include: the NIH-funded BIRCWH and KL2 Programs, our institutionally-funded Simmons Scholar Program, the Translational and Clinical Research Curriculum and the K2R Program. Each of these programs fills a unique training niche in the lifecycle of a clinical/translational researcher. Under Gene's leadership, the ETCD Core will seek to: a) increase the number and quality of available mentors for clinical and translational researchers; b) develop new training mechanisms for interdisciplinary team science; and c) extend the outreach of the ETCD Core in order to engage audiences across the State of North Carolina and nationally. Gene is a member of the external advisory boards of four other CTSA institutions and an active member of the National Education Committee of the CTSA consortium. As a result, he is ideally positioned to influence training priorities on a national level and bring best practices to UNC.

Gene received his MD in 1969 from the School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. He then moved to Chapel Hill where he completed his training in both Internal Medicine and Hematology, after which he joined the faculty of the UNC School of Medicine in 1975 as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1979 and to Professor in 1986.

In 1981, Gene became the founding Director of the UNC Comprehensive Sickle Cell Program, and in 1988 he, along with his counterparts from Duke, competed successfully for the Duke-UNC Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center. This center, funded by the NIH until 2008, has always been considered a model of Duke-UNC collaboration. In 1989, Gene assumed the Program Directorship of UNC's NIH-funded General Clinical Research Center (GCRC), a role he held for ten years. In this position, Gene was able to grow our GCRC substantially, increasing its NIH grant from \$1 million to over \$4 million annually, and building it into a national model, one that received among the very highest priority scores awarded by peer reviewers during the competitive renewal process. His GCRC role gave him an opportunity to interact with dozens of clinical investigators from all levels. As a result, he gained an even greater understanding of the various barriers and obstacles faced by researchers across disciplines and training levels.

Despite his substantial administrative responsibilities with the GCRC, Gene always maintained an active clinical and research program focused primarily on sickle cell disease, for which he consistently held peer-reviewed grant support from the NIH. Much of his research focused on the membrane transport properties of the normal human erythrocyte and on its disordered physiology in a variety of pathological states, especially sickle cell disease. In 1995, while still Director of the GCRC, Gene agreed to assume the leadership of the UNC MD-PhD Program. He has proven to be an ideal fit for this role because of his understanding of basic and clinical science and his passion for the training of young people. Less than two years after assuming this new role, Gene wrote and received funding for UNC's first Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) grant, an award that has enabled our MD-PhD Program to grow from 12 to 66 students and to compete successfully with our peer institutions for the very best applicants.

In 1999, Gene was named by Dean Houpt as the first Executive Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Faculty Development in the UNC School of Medicine. In this new role, Gene was able to use his unique insight into the challenges faced by junior faculty members seeking to balance clinical, research and teaching responsibilities to design programs that supported these individuals through specialized research training. Gene has always been passionate about the training of junior faculty, having been a mentor to many junior faculty members as well as a participant in numerous NIH-funded pre- and post-doctoral training programs. He wrote and has been the Principal Investigator on three NIH-funded K12 grants: the Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (or BIRCWH) award; the NCRR Clinical Research Scholar Program; and the Roadmap Clinical Research Award. In addition to these NIH-funded programs, Gene also helped to develop and has directed for 10 years our institutionally-funded Simmons (Minority) Scholar Program. These four junior faculty development programs currently support over 30 junior faculty members, all of whom are committed to academic, research-oriented careers. Notably, these programs have selected Scholars from all five Schools on the Health Affairs Campus, as well as talented investigators from the College of Arts and Science. Thus, although his office was based in the School of Medicine, his influence on training of clinical and translational researchers has extended throughout the entire UNC campus.

Dr. Orringer's accomplishments have been recognized on a national, statewide, and local level. He has served two four-year terms as a member (and Chairperson) of the NIH Sickle Cell Disease Advisory Committee, as a member of the NIH GCRC Study Section, and as the President of the National GCRC Program Directors' Association. He is the Treasurer and a member of the Steering Committee of the Clinical Research Forum, and he currently serves as a member of the Advisory Committee of the Office of Research on Women's Health at the NIH. He was named by several North Carolina Governors to serve on the Governor's Council for Sickle Cell Disease, a role he held for over 20 years.

Finally, he was the 2006 recipient of the Philip Hench Award, an honor given annually to that individual selected by the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine as its most distinguished alumnus.

We look forward to working with Gene as he focuses on the increasingly important challenge for which he is ideally suited: training of the next generation of researchers in the new disciplines of translational research and team-oriented science.

We will soon initiate a search for a new Executive Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs.

Etta D. Pisano, MD  
Vice Dean for Academic Affairs

William L. Roper, MD, MPH  
Dean, UNC School of Medicine