Dear Colleagues,

I have written a "Dear Colleagues" letter a couple of times since my arrival at TTUHSC about 9 months ago and want to update you again on our progress toward developing research at TTUHSC. I thank the large number of people who have helped us to move forward. We are making great and measurable progress.

1. Our **Strategic Planning** and **Research Support Committee**s have evaluated where we can make strategic investments to grow the research enterprise. I have posted a Powerpoint deck here that summarizes some of the things that we are now discussing. In each case, we will identify metrics to evaluate our success after a year. This is all still a "work in progress," so please feel free to comment or make suggestions. We hope to start implementation of some of these programs in the next few months.

2. With Dr. Schneider in his role as Dean of the Graduate School, we **have met with a group of the postdocs to talk about the new OP for them** and identify how the GSBS and Research Office can facilitate their learning experience. OP 70.29 has been posted here; it describes the progress for appointing postdocs, requirements for postdocs ethics training, duration of tenure and the requirements for mentorship. This document came out of an extensive discussion by the faculty. If you interact with postdocs, please review the document and note that there is a letter of offer to use when offering a position; this has been approved by the TTUS attorneys and should obviate many of the problems we have been seeing. A **template** is posted on the Research Office (RO) landing page. The GSBS and RO will become an institutional "home" for the fellows and provide a greater educational experience and career-training. The training will be available for both students and postdoctoral fellows.

3. Our effort to achieve AAHRPP accreditation is now underway. Beth Taraban and Jim Hutson are leading the charge. The Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP) is an independent, non-profit accrediting body that provides the "gold standard" of assurance that an organization's human research protection program meets rigorous standards for quality and protection. "To earn accreditation, organizations must provide tangible evidence—through policies, procedures, and practices—of their commitment to scientifically and ethically sound research and to continuous improvement." (From aahrpp.org) A Powerpoint slide deck is posted here and a one page fact sheet is here. As part of this process, a new Human Research Protection manual has been developed by Beth Taraban and Kathy Thomas and can be reviewed here (near the book logo).

4. A **popular feature** of the RO website has been the list of non-federal research opportunities that is updated weekly and can be viewed here. It turned out that this site was popular to other Universities too—so it has been restricted to TTUHSC IP addresses only. I am happy to see that a large number of new grant applications are coming from this site.

5. Sixty members of the administrative staff on all campuses have completed a 1.5 day training in **pre- and post-award administration**. Every researcher should be near the assistance that they need to construct and administer a research grant.
6. We are developing compliance with the Drug Enforcement Agency regulations. Please read this - if your laboratory uses scheduled drugs in the laboratory or administers them to animals.

7. Our joint research programs with TTU are growing and I expect to write more about that next time. We learned recently that the CH Foundation has agreed to fund our joint $750K proposal to purchase an Illumina HiSeq genetic sequencer, which should be very valuable and ready for use by the late fall, 2014.

8. The Presidential Lecture this year will be Dr. Anthony R. Means (CV here). The date is October 23, 2014 at noon in a place to be announced. He was the Head of Pharmacology and Cancer Biology at Duke Medical Center for many years and has now "retired" to West Texas. He has a faculty appointment at Baylor College of Medicine and runs a funded lab while retired, working to define the molecular basis of inflammation and hepatocellular cancer. He is an outstanding translational speaker.

I am happy to accept nominations of speakers for 2015. We are especially seeking people that are accomplished in translational areas. If possible, please send a CV.

Remember: we are all part of this transformation and your input is both welcome and encouraged.

/Michael