



**June 22, 2016
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

EDUCATE · DISCOVER · IMPACT

Contact: Sarah Harper, (602) 402-1341, sarah.k.harper@azregents.edu
Julie Newberg, (602) 686-1803, julie.newberg@azregents.edu

Regents Seek Answers and Take Steps to Address Concerns Regarding UA Colleges of Medicine

Special board meeting also marks beginning of UA presidential search transition process

(Phoenix, Ariz.) – Today, in a special meeting, the Arizona Board of Regents discussed concerns and sought answers regarding leadership changes at the UA Colleges of Medicine and also discussed next steps in the University of Arizona presidential transition planning.

UA Presidential Search

Beginning the search process for the transition of University of Arizona President Ann Weaver Hart, the board voted to designate current board chair Jay Heiler, and incoming board chair Greg Patterson to work with the board, UA President Hart and the board office to address the transition of President Hart from her role as university president. Earlier this month, the board announced that President Hart provided notice of her decision not to seek an extension to her current contract as UA president.

“I want to convey, as I’ve stated publically already, that I am committed to commencing a presidential search this fall to ensure a successful transition in the presidency at the University of Arizona,” Heiler said. “There are several critical steps in the process to launch a search. For example, we will need to establish a presidential search committee, and determine if we will engage a search consultant. There is much work to be done, but I believe it is important for the public, and for UA students and families, faculty and staff, to know that the board is moving forward in planning for this search.”

Heiler shared that the board wants the strongest and best leader for the University of Arizona, “one who is willing to tackle the challenges we face and come to the table with innovative ideas, and one who will lead this extraordinary university to a new level of achievement for our students and our state.” Heiler said the board’s website soon will have a dedicated space that will detail the process and anticipated timeline for the search, as well as frequently asked questions about the search process.

UA Colleges of Medicine

Also in today’s board meeting, the members received an update on the UA Colleges of Medicine in response to concerns raised by members of the community regarding leadership transition at the Phoenix campus.

“The board takes very seriously the concerns of our community regarding the University of Arizona Colleges of Medicine in Tucson and Phoenix,” Heiler said. “The UA Colleges of Medicine are prestigious institutions and produce outstanding physicians of the highest caliber. Equally, we take very seriously our responsibility to provide an environment in which our students are able to succeed and learn from the best and brightest faculty. These colleges of medicine, and our students and faculty, play an essential role in supplying the physician workforce for our state, and so they are vital to the health and wellbeing of our citizens.”

Board president Eileen Klein outlined a number of actions that the board is taking to respond to concerns, including key conversations that are underway with the Arizona Medical Association and Banner Health. She also stated that meetings are being scheduled for the ABOR Health Affairs Committee, likely in Tucson and Phoenix.

“It is very clear how very vested in the community is in our outstanding colleges of medicine and we want to engage with the public and hear concerns,” Klein said. “These hearings in Tucson and Phoenix will ensure the public and the community are up to date on the current performance and future education and research plans at the colleges.”

Klein shared that items to be discussed at the meetings will include the status of accreditation at the UA College of Medicine – Phoenix; leadership changes and key faculty recruitments; an understanding of the funds flow of dollars generated through the affiliation with Banner Health; and the use of state appropriated dollars for the colleges of medicine. Klein said these meetings will also provide an opportunity for the community to understand and be as up-to-date as possible the status of the UA Colleges of Medicine and that calls to the audience will be included in the meeting agendas.

Joe G. N. “Skip” Garcia, senior vice president for the UA health sciences, addressed several questions and concerns from the board, including the status of relationships with the Arizona Medical Association and Banner Health. Garcia said he is very optimistic about the relationship with Banner, stating that the UA College of Medicine–Phoenix is “poised for transformative growth and development of its full mission of research, education and patient care.”

Garcia noted that while gaps in communication with the Arizona Medical Association have been identified, he wants communication to be stellar. “We can and will bridge these gaps.”

Garcia also highlighted that several new leaders are being named for the UA College of Medicine – Phoenix Campus, including Ken Ramos, M.D., Ph.D., interim dean of the campus, and new department chairs for the departments of surgery, family medicine, obstetrics/gynecology, psychiatry, and medicine.

“The theme we are all trying to convey is how deeply committed all of us at UA are to the success of our colleges of medicine and how very important they are to the future of health in Arizona,” Hart said.

Approval for ASU Senior Housing Project

The board also approved today an option to lease 1.5 acres of real property located at the southwest corner of Myrtle Avenue and University Drive in Tempe to the Arizona State University Foundation for a New American University for development of a senior housing project.

###