MEMORANDUM

TO: University Community

FROM: Mark B. Rosenberg, President

SUBJECT: Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine Leadership

DATE: August 16, 2021

Dear members of the university community:

It is with mixed emotions that we inform you that after nearly three years at the helm of the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine (HWCOM), Dean Robert Sackstein has announced that he will be accepting the position of Senior Vice President for Global Medical Affairs at FIU. Dr. Juan Cendan, Vice Dean, Executive Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and Professor of Surgery at HWCOM, will serve as interim dean of the college. We are grateful for all that Dr. Sackstein has done to move HWCOM forward.

As SVP for Global Medical Affairs, Dr. Sackstein’s responsibilities will include enabling international collaborations and partnerships in biomedical science and healthcare, in collaboration with Dr. Pablo Ortiz, Vice President and Vice Provost Regional and World Locations, and the FIU Global office, and otherwise working with Dr. Ortiz and his team to help support the FIU Global Strategy Leadership Group in aligning and coordinating partnership opportunities that lead to emerging world center destinations, improved global rankings and opportunities for impact and reputation. Dr. Sackstein will continue his research efforts in the field of glycoscience undertaken at the Translational Glycobiology Institute at Florida International University and building the Institute to be top-ranked.

Dr. Sackstein’s many accomplishments as dean include advancing student scholarly activities and improving residency placements in highly competitive training programs, initiating a pre-matriculation research program for HWCOM students, shepherding HWCOM through the COVID-19 pandemic and leading the HWCOM efforts in providing needed medical and social services to the South Florida community, spearheading the creation of the Translational Glycobiology Institute at FIU with concurrent enhancement of HWCOM and affiliate hospital research activities, and
recruiting several prominent faculty scholars to HWCOM. Dr. Sackstein also launched an MD-PhD degree pathway at HWCOM. During Dr. Sackstein’s tenure, HWCOM implemented telemedicine within the HWCOM Ambulatory Care Center and in NeighborhoodHELP to provide needed medical care at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with national and international recognition for the success of NeighborhoodHELP in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 among the medically underserved in South Florida. Further, HWCOM completed and implemented its 2021-26 Strategic Plan.

Effective Sept. 4, 2021, HWCOM will be led by Dr. Cendan, who was hired by Dr. Sackstein. Dr. Cendan came to FIU from the University of Central Florida. Dr. Cendan is a widely published researcher and recently received the Association of American Medical Colleges’ Thomas Hale Award for Investigators. Dr. Cendan is a board-certified surgeon with a clinical focus on minimally invasive surgery and surgical disorders of the breast. He came to FIU from the University of Central Florida College of Medicine, where he was a founding faculty member and served as chair of the Department of Medical Education and professor of surgery. Prior to that, he was an associate professor of surgery at the University of Florida College of Medicine. Dr. Cendan earned his undergraduate degree in Biomedical Engineering from Tulane University and his M.D. from the University of Florida College of Medicine, where he also completed residency training in surgery. Dr. Cendan was recommended by Dr. Sackstein for this post.

Please join me in wishing Dr. Sackstein success as SVP of Global Medical Affairs while continuing the groundbreaking work he is doing at the Translational Glycobiology Institute and in welcoming Dr. Cendan to the role of Interim Dean of our Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine.

Sincerely,

Mark B. Rosenberg
President