



**My History of the
UNLV School of Medicine**

**MY EFFORTS TO HELP CREATE THE UNLV
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
THE EARLY BEGINNINGS
2004 - 2005**

CHANCELLOR JAMES E. ROGERS AND REGENT JAMES DEAN LEAVITT

I was elected to the Nevada Board of Regents in November 2004 and took office in January 2005. Jim Rogers was the interim Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education, (NSHE). I quickly discovered that Jim was passionate about developing an academic health science center in Las Vegas to help meet the unmet health care needs in southern Nevada. In late 2005, after discussions with Chancellor Rogers and board chairman, Bret Whipple, I suggested the creation of an ad hoc Health Sciences Center Committee (HSCC) and an Advisory Committee (AC) to create a structure that would allow Jim's vision to blossom. However, it was critical that the Board also buy into the vision.

THE TWENTY YEAR NO UNLV MEDICAL SCHOOL POLICY

In February 2005, the Nevada Board of Regents (BOR) approved Chancellor Roger's recommendation for a policy that limited professional degree programs in the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to a single school of medicine, dentistry, and law for 20 years. In essence, this policy meant that the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) was prohibited from planning or developing their own medical school for the next 20 years. This proposed policy reflected the Chancellor's commitment to a deal he was rumored to have made with highly influential majority leader, State Senator Bill Raggio. Rumor has it that in exchange for the Senator's efforts to secure more funding from the legislature for southern Nevada institutions and the health sciences initiative, the Chancellor would not attempt to relocate the existing University of Nevada School of Medicine (UNSOM), from Reno to Las Vegas.

CREATION OF THE AD HOC HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER COMMITTEE

In May 2006, Chairman Whipple appointed myself as Chairman of the ad hoc HSCC and appointed Ron Kline, MD., as Chairman of the Advisory Committee. Dr. Kline was an out-spoken community advocate that shared our passion.

The original members of the ad hoc HSCC, besides myself, were Regents: Stavros S. Anthony, Dorothy S. Gallagher, Linda C. Howard, and Michael B. Wixom. The original members of the Advisory Committee were: Assemblyman Morse Arberry, Jr., Ms. Bobbette Bond, Mr. Steve Cohen, Mark Doubrava, MD., Mitchell Forman, DO., Ms. Betsy Fretwell, Mr. Thomas E. Gallagher, Ms. Betsy Gilbertson, Steven Glyman, MD., Wayne Hardwick, MD., Don Havins, MD., JD., State Senator Joe Heck, D.O., Gerald Higgins, MD., Ikram Khan, MD., Zaven S. Khachaturian, PhD, James Lenhart, MD, State Senator Bernice Martin-Matthews, John McDonald, MD., William W. Orrison, Jr., MD., Clark County Commissioner Rory Reid, Clark County Manager, Thom Reilly, PhD., Richard Seher, MD., Ms.

Lisa Serwin, and Mr. Bill Welch. At this time, the only NSHE staff support was Executive Vice Chancellor and General Counsel Daniel J. Klaich, and Ms. Marcia Turner.

On October 10, 2007, the ad hoc HSCC and AC was disbanded and restructured when the Board of Regents voted to make this a permanent standing committee of the Board and also changed the name to the Health Sciences System Committee (HSSC). I remained as chairman of this committee.

OTHER RELATED MEDICAL INITIATIVES

In addition to the creation of the HSSC, there were several other initiatives underway to improve medical care throughout Nevada. The Nevada Cancer Institute, led by Jim and Heather Murren, was founded in 2002 and opened its doors in 2005. It was designated as the official cancer institute by the State of Nevada, from 2003–2013. In 2006, Governor Kenny Guinn created the Governor’s Commission on Medical Education, Research, and Training, which was chaired by community leader Mr. Donald D. Snyder. I was appointed by the Governor to serve on this committee. There was also an Interim Legislative Committee on Healthcare, which was studying related issues. The Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health, led by Larry and Camille Ruvo, was in the planning stages, with construction beginning in 2007, and the center opening in 2010. At this time, visionary Mayor Oscar B. Goodman and the Las Vegas City Council set aside eight acres in Symphony Park for the development of an academic medical center. In northern Nevada, the Whittemore Chronic Fatigue Center (now called the Whittemore Peterson Institute for Neuro-immune Disease) was being developed and led by Harvey and Annette Whittemore, who would later partner with the UNSOM.

THOM REILLY AND DR. MAURICIO TREVISAN 2006 - 2009

In July 2006, Thom Reilly, PhD., was hired as Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer of the NSHE Health Sciences System (HSS). After less than two months, Dr. Reilly resigned, and Dr. Mauricio Trevisan was hired on August 16, 2007.

Dr. Trevisan was hired by Chancellor Rogers, and it was his responsibility to craft and execute the BOR’s vision. The 2007 to 2009 years consisted mostly of a statewide listening tour by Dr. Trevisan as he and Greg Hart of Larson Allen consulted on how to best accomplish the Chancellor’s and Regent’s vision. Fundraising efforts had limited success outside of the Andre Agassi event and the generous matching gift from the Lincy Foundation. Nevada was entering the recession, and Chancellor Roger’s dream had yet to catch fire with the Board of Regents or the community at large.

CHAIRMAN JAMES DEAN LEAVITT AND REGENT MARK DOUBRAVA, M.D. 2009 - 2011

I was elected by my colleagues as Chairman of the Board of Regents on July 1, 2009, and Regent Mark Doubrava MD., was elected to the Board of Regents in 2010. Chancellor Rogers last day

as Chancellor was June 30, 2009, with Daniel J. Klaich replacing him. I appointed Regent Dorothy Gallagher to chair the HSSC during these two years. Having a northern Regent in charge helped maintain the support I would need from the full board in the near future.

These two years were significant in three respects. First, the State of Nevada entered its worst recession since the Great Depression of 1929. The entire higher education budget of 2009-2011 was slashed by incoming Governor Sandoval. There was no new money for higher education and for the development of any health science initiatives. The Board was cutting and eliminating programs and even discussing the possible closure of campuses and institutions. These were dark times in higher education for faculty, staff, and students.

Second, could I as Chairman of the Board along with Chancellor Klaich, continue the vision and enthusiasm of Chancellor Rogers for the development of an academic medical center and health science system? Considerable efforts were made these two years to partner with University Medical Center (UMC) and to create a separate UMC Hospital Advisory Board (HAB). John F. O'Reilly, Commissioners Weekly, Sisolak, and Giunchigliani all provided strong support in accomplishing this critical goal.

Third, the addition of noted Ophthalmologist Dr. Doubrava to the Board was instrumental. Dr. Doubrava had served as an original advisory committee member of the ad hoc HSCC that I chaired in 2006, and was intimately familiar with many of the issues involved in starting a medical school. We had a meaningful pre-existing relationship, and he and I worked closely together in leading the effort to establish the UNLV School of Medicine. He was a graduate of the University of Nevada School of Medicine (UNSOM), he was a native Las Vegas, his father was a well-known physician in the community, and Dr. Doubrava was deeply involved in the Las Vegas medical community.

THE DEPARTURE OF DR. TREVISAN 2011 - 2013

With the departure of Dr. Trevisan, Chancellor Klaich recommended the creation of a Health Sciences System (HSS) Council, moving the NSHE from a managing to a coordinating role. Was this philosophical decision the beginning of the end of the HSS, or a natural evolution of the HSS initiative/experiment? Marcia Turner, PhD., was promoted to Executive Vice-Chancellor of the Health Sciences System and would assume many of his responsibilities, but direct control was shifted from the system to the UNR and UNLV campuses. Ms. Turner was the designated staff support to the HSSC and was responsible for implementing the Regents directions and priorities. She reported directly to Chancellor Klaich and worked closely with me and the HSSC.

A FLICKERING LIGHT - THE LINCY INSTITUTE

In May 2013, The Lincy Institute commissioned Tripp Umbach, a medical consulting firm to prepare an economic impact report to show the value of a new, four-year allopathic medical school in Las Vegas. Key findings, released and presented at UNLV in October 2013, were. "That a full-scale

four-year independent medical school in Las Vegas would have a substantially higher economic impact than a regional campus of the UNSOM. The average annual economic impact of an additional state-supported medical school in the U.S., shows that having more than one publically supported medical school equals \$882 million. This is more than three times the average of a four-year regional campus of an established medical school (\$245 million). Tripp Umbach, estimated that a new four-year medical school developed in Las Vegas as a result of a joint venture between UNSOM and a new school developed in Las Vegas between UNSOM and UNLV would have a total annual economic impact of \$1.2 billion at maturity (2030).”

An economic case was now being made for a new medical school at UNLV. Robert E. Lang, PhD., was the Executive Director of the Lincy Institute and a nationally recognized authority on urban growth, economic development, and population dynamics. His leadership and expertise was instrumental in helping make a compelling argument for a UNLV School of Medicine to a skeptical legislature and public.

June 2011

Dr. Geddes was the new Chairman of the Board, and I was once again appointed to be the Chairman of the HSSC. There was always tension because the NSHE already had a medical school at UNR with a substantial presence in Las Vegas. How would the BOR’s react to a new UNLV School of Medicine and what would that mean to the future of the UNR School of Medicine? Could they co-exist in southern Nevada or would they leave and never return?

REGENT MARK DOUBRAVA, M.D.

June 2013

The first informational discussion regarding a potential UNLV School of Medicine was in June 2013. Dr. Doubrava was now Chair of the Health Sciences Committee, and I was his Vice-Chair. Several Regents expressed skepticism about UNLV starting its own medical school, citing the cost and how it would impact the UNSOM. Nonetheless, we were actually discussing the issue. The spark generated by this discussion ignited a blaze that would soon capture the imagination of Southern Nevada leaders. Nevada was starting to climb out of the recession.

ELKO, NEVADA

September 2013

The next discussion surrounding these issues was in Elko, Nevada where Dean Tom Schwenk of the UNSOM presented his vision statement for Public Medical Education in Nevada. I was now Chair again of the HSSC, and Regent Doubrava was my Vice-Chairman. Dean Schwenk opined that the ideal governance structure and organizational structure would only be successful if there was a clear resolution of the north-south tensions surrounding the UNSOM that had plagued the school and significantly detracted from its success since its creation. He added that whatever vision is chosen will require a unified commitment and support from the governor, the state legislature, the Board of

Regents, and local political leaders and donors. Discussions at this time involved the development of a branch campus at UNLV, rather than a full four year independent school of their own.

SOMETHING MAGICAL WAS HAPPENING

At this same meeting in Elko, I drafted the first action item regarding public medical expansion (PME) in northern, rural, and southern Nevada. This was historic, as the Regents were not just discussing PME expansion but acting on it. Powerful forces were converging all at once. Momentum was building amongst the Regents, the state was climbing out of the recession, UNLV was energized, and southern Nevada community members and elected officials were rallying around this project. The Board was also getting strong support from Chancellor Klaich and from current Board Chairman Kevin J. Page, as well as the other Regents who were serving on the HSSC. The relationships I had developed with my colleagues over many years were bearing fruit.

CHAIRMAN PAGE, CHANCELLOR KLAICH LVRJ

The meeting with the Las Vegas Review (LVRJ) editorial board was a pivotal moment. Chairman Page, Vice-Chairman Trachok, and Chancellor Klaich made a compelling case for the establishment and creation of an independent UNLV medical school. Once the LVRJ was on board they helped build community support, excitement, and momentum for the project.

In November 2013, the UNSOM and UNLV entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that provided a framework for the expansion and enhancement of PME in Nevada. Specific highlights from the MOU included directions from the Board of Regents to develop detailed plans for a full-scale, four-year allopathic medical school campus in Las Vegas, along with the continued development of a full-scale four-year campus in Reno under the continuing accreditation of the UNSOM. This historic document cemented and outlined the BOR's commitment to creating an independent public medical school at UNLV.

PRESIDENT NEAL J. SMATRESK - UNLV PRESIDENT

President Smatresk was a huge supporter of the development of the UNLV School of Medicine. Even though UNLV was prohibited from developing the school as a result of the 2005 policy prohibition, he and his cabinet were focused on developing the Top Tier Initiative and the most important part of the initiative was the development of an Academic Health Center. The center would include a fully accredited medical school that is integrated with the other health science units.

RECISSION OF THE TWENTY YEAR NO UNLV SCHOOL OF MEDICINE POLICY

In December 2013, the BOR's rescinded the 2005 policy prohibiting the creation of a UNLV School of Medicine. This was the last procedural barrier that existed to the development of the school. The BOR's could now precede full bore and we would do just that. Normally, academic programs are driven by the university and normally go through the rigorous and cumbersome academic affairs

process. This initiative was unique because of the 2005 ban. This was a Regent driven project which specifically directed UNLV to create their own medical school. Of course, UNLV was a willing and eager partner.

CHANCELLOR KLAICH AND THE STATEWIDE STEERING COMMITTEE

A Statewide Steering Committee was created in January 2014 to serve as the Coordinating Council for the statewide business plan for expanding (PME) at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Committee was created to serve as a collaborative vehicle for data collection, market analysis, analysis of best practices, and strategic directions.

The 2014 Steering Committee consisted of the following committee members: Dan Klaich, Chancellor, Marc Johnson, President of UNR, Kevin Carman, Executive Vice President and Provost of UNR, Thomas Schwenk, Dean and Vice President for Health Affairs at UNSOM, Donald D. Snyder, President of UNLV, John White, Executive Vice President and Provost of UNLV, Barbara Atkinson, Planning Dean at UNLV, Phil Satre, statewide business leader, and Michael Yackira, statewide business leader.

The role of the Statewide Steering Committee was to provide a decision-making framework that was efficient to govern the statewide business planning process for expanding public medical education in a collaborative manner. The Steering Committee made necessary recommendations to the Board of Regents on matters of planning, structure, curriculum, and budget.

The Steering Committee was ably led by Chancellor Klaich and brought all the key players to the table at the same time.

UNLV MEDICAL SCHOOL

The Case Statement for PME was presented to the Board of Regents on May 15, 2014. Specific highlights from the Case Statement included the dire need for public medical education expansion, as well as graduate medical education, physician recruitment, and retention efforts. This document was endorsed by the full Board of Regents and was successfully used in our subsequent legislative efforts to secure the necessary funding for this ambitious project.

DONALD D. SNYDER – NEW PRESIDENT OF UNLV February 2014

Donald D. Snyder was the new President of UNLV. This change in Presidents was particularly fortuitous to the BOR's as President Snyder was the former Chairman of the Governor's Medical, Education, Research and Training Commission. His medical background, his relationships throughout the state, and knowledge of the community would prove invaluable. Significantly, President Snyder and Provost John White hired Barbara Atkinson to be the Planning Dean of the proposed UNLV School of Medicine. After completing his interim presidency, Mr. Snyder worked closely with new

UNLV President, Len D. Jessup, in successfully lobbying the legislature to fund the UNLV School of Medicine.

DEAN BARBARA ATKINSON
May 2014

Dr. Atkinson was appointed planning Dean of the UNLV School of Medicine in May 2014. During this time, she worked tirelessly to create an innovative vision and education program for the school, generated strong regional and legislative support, hired a core team of academic faculty and staff, and assembled a Community Advisory Board (now called the Community Engagement Board) to align regional needs with the school's mission. Before arriving at UNLV, Dr. Atkinson was the emeritus vice-chancellor and a professor at the University of Kansas School of Medicine. Her significant efforts were directly responsible for the success of this project.

FOUNDING OF THE UNLV SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
August 22, 2014

The UNLV School of Medicine was officially established on August 22, 2014, when the Board of Regents approved funding for the medical school's start-up costs. The budget was submitted to Governor Brian Sandoval and the Nevada Legislature where it was subsequently approved. On June 11, 2015, Governor Sandoval signed Senate Bill 514 into law at UNLV.

UNLV PRESIDENT LEN D. JESSUP
January 2015

President Jessup was appointed by the BOR's in January 2015 as the 11th President of UNLV. One month later, he would be lobbying the legislature to fully fund the UNLV School of Medicine. He worked closely with former President Snyder, Chair Page, Vice-Chair Trachok, and Chancellor Klaich.

GOVERNOR SANDOVAL
2015

NSHE legislative efforts were led by Board Chairman Kevin J. Page, Vice-Chairman Rick Trachok, Chancellor Dan Klaich, UNLV President Len D. Jessup, and Dean Barbara Atkinson. A critical meeting occurred with Chair Page, Vice-Chair Trachok, Chancellor Klaich, and Governor Sandoval. This meeting resulted in the Governor including funding for the UNLV School of Medicine in his upcoming budget.

LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

Legislative leaders who led the effort to secure approval and funding included Senate Majority Leader Michael Roberson, Senate Minority Leader Aaron D. Ford, Speaker John Hambrick, Assembly Majority Leader D. Paul Andersen and Assistant Assembly Minority Leader Ira Hansen. The efforts by these leaders resulted in developing the approval and mechanism for funding the school. The UNLV School of Medicine exists because of their dedication to this legacy project.

THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BOARD

The Community Engagement Board provided guidance and direction to the UNLV School of Medicine. They played a vital role in the development of the school and many travelled to Carson City and met with the Governor and legislative leadership to make the case for the funding and creation of the UNLV Medical School. Chair of the Committee was Ikram Khan, MD., Vice-Chair K. Warren Volker MD., Tony Alamo, MD., Amir Bacchus, MD., Bobbette Bond, Joan Brookhyser, MD., Michael Brown, Jeffrey Cummings, MD., Mark Doubrava, MD., Michael Edwards, MD., William Evans, MD., Mark Fine, Yolanda Flores, MD., Renee Franklin, Doug Geinzer, Constantine George, MD., Mayor Carolyn Goodman, Shelley Gitomer, Mayor Andy Hafen, Harry Haggerty, Brian Iriye, MD., Florence Jameson, MD., Gard Jameson, Peggy W. Kearns, Ramu Komanduri, MD., Andy Kuniyuki, Bruce Layne, Mayor John Lee, Brian Lauzon, Gary Marrone, MD., J.D., Dianne Mazzu, MD., Robert McBeath, MD., Jerrie Merritt, Bennett Mitchell, MD., Julie Murray, Abraham Jim Nagy, MD., Rachakonda Prabhu, MD., Ray Rawson, DDS., Rajesh Shrotriya, MD., Kathy Silver, Don Snyder, Nick Spirtos, MD., Lois Tarkanian, PhD., Javier Trujillo and Jim Zeiter.

MILESTONES

The UNLV School of Medicine received its Preliminary Accreditation on October 18, 2016 and began accepting applications for its Charter Class which began their studies in August 2017. The Charter Class will graduate its first students in 2021.

A VISION REALIZED, A DREAM FULFILLED

In 2005, no one would have imagined that my initial decision to ask board chair Bret Whipple to create a health science committee and his decision to appoint me as chairman of that committee would lead to the eventual creation of the UNLV School of Medicine. As a five time chairman of the health science committee, the opportunity to lead the effort in establishing the School was the highlight of my service on the board. It was a privilege and honor to be involved from the beginning, middle, and end of this legacy project. The incredible support my colleagues and I received from UNLV administration and the medical community made this vision possible. As a lawyer and the son of a doctor, it was a privilege to pay tribute to my dear father in this way. The story of the UNLV school of Medicine has only just begun, one can only imagine its future.

