Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

National Hispanic Heritage Month is September 15-October 15, and we take this opportunity to pay tribute to the countless contributions Hispanics have made to strengthen health care, scientific discovery and the very fabric of our nation.

We at UCLA Health and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA join in this national commemoration as we continue our efforts to increase the number of Hispanics in science, medicine and other health care-related fields.

Since 2002, Médicos, Enfermeros y Dentistas Para el Pueblo/Medical Preparation and Education Pipeline (MEDPEP) has been working to guide Hispanic and other underrepresented minority students through their community college experience and transition into four-year university or other health care professional programs. MEDPEP provides research opportunities, leadership development and familial support to these students. The pipeline program is administered by the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture, the leading research institute in California providing reliable data on Latino health, which we are proud to note is based here in the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

On-campus student associations also are thriving in their efforts to support the training and development of Hispanic physicians and other health care professionals. The Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) – which brings together students, alumni and health care professionals with its motto “medicine is our passion, diversity is our strength” – offers mentorship along with educational and volunteer opportunities for premedical students. And the award-winning UCLA chapter of the Society for Advancement of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science continues its outreach to K-12 students, undergraduates, graduates and transfer students in the Los Angeles area to increase the numbers of underrepresented students in higher education and science.

Hispanic and other underrepresented students are able to participate in two summer programs facilitated by the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA: the UCLA Premedical/Predental Enrichment Program (PREP) and the Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP).

We also remain committed to increasing the number of physicians who serve the most vulnerable communities through efforts like UCLA PRIME, a five-year dual-degree program focusing on the development of leaders in medicine addressing policy, treatment and research in health care for the underserved, and the International Medical Graduate program, which provides residency training in family medicine for Latin American medical school graduates interested in working as bilingual primary-care physicians in California’s rural and inner urban communities.

At UCLA Health and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, we are honored to work alongside our diverse group of faculty, staff and students who strive to improve the field of medicine and deliver the best health care. We value their unwavering commitment to inspiring, encouraging and training the next generation of healthcare professionals. You can read some of their stories here.

Sincerely,

Johnese Spisso, MPA  
President, UCLA Health  
CEO, UCLA Hospital System  
Associate Vice Chancellor, Health Sciences

Kelsey C. Martin, MD, PhD  
Dean, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA  
Professor, Biological Chemistry and Psychiatry