

**Minutes of the Board of Regents  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences**

**Meeting No. 213  
August 23, 2022**

The Board of Regents (BOR), Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) was held on Tuesday, August 23, 2023, both in-person in the Everett Alvarez Board of Regents Conference Room, USU, Bethesda, Maryland, and via Zoom.

The meeting date and agenda items were published in the *Federal Register*, and each Regent was duly notified prior to the meeting. The Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Ms. Annette Askins-Roberts, was present during the entire meeting. The meeting was called to order by the DFO at 12:00 p.m.

Members and briefers listed below were in attendance:

**Board Members**

Nancy Dickey, M.D., Chair  
VADM (Ret.) Raquel Bono, M.D., Member  
Julio Frenk, M.D., Member  
Eric Holmboe, M.D., Member  
General (Ret.) Richard Myers, M.S., Member  
HON James Peake, M.D., Member  
Antonia Villarruel, Ph.D., R.N., Member  
Seileen Mullen, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (Secretary of Defense Designee)  
HON Jonathan Woodson, M.D., President, USU  
LTG R. Scott Dingle, MS, USA, Surgeon General of the U.S. Army  
Lt Gen Robert Miller, MC, USAF, Surgeon General of the U.S. Air Force & U.S. Space Force  
RADM Denise Hinton, M.D., Deputy Surgeon General of U.S. Public Health Service (Representing U.S. Surgeon General)  
RADM Anne Swap, Director of the National Capital Region Market (Representing Surgeon General, U.S. Navy)

**Briefers**

Eric Elster, MD, FACS, FRCS (Eng), Dean, F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine (SOM), USU  
Diane Seibert, Ph.D., FAANP, FAAN, Associate Dean, Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing (GSN), USU  
Drew W. Fallis, DDS, MS, MHPE, Dean, Postgraduate Dental College (PDC), USU  
Lula W. Pelayo, Ph.D., R.N., Dean, College of Allied Health Sciences (CAHS), USU

**OPENING COMMENTS**

Ms. Askins-Roberts called the meeting to order. Initial comments were made by the Board

Chair, Dr. Dickey. She reviewed the meeting agenda and then requested the Regents and attendees to introduce themselves.

Ms. Askins-Roberts provided administrative remarks and thanked USU staff, briefers, contract support and attendees for their participation.

## **USU PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Woodson thanked the new members for helping advance the mission of USU. He noted that the agenda will take a deeper dive into what USU has to offer. He called attention to the environment the university is in and the environment the university must operate in terms of military structure and the Department of Defense (DoD). He noted the ongoing challenges that occur in terms of prevalent diseases and the world of digital information transformation. President Woodson stated that USU needs to keep ahead of changes in military and civilian health care by accelerating the organizational design and decision-making. Leaders of the organization must know how to position themselves to make them competitive. USU needs to embrace that kind of mindset to be a leader and anticipate the future. USU needs to compete for students, maintain a diverse student body, and have programs that evolve the student experience to make it attractive so the most talented people are called to serve the nation. USU needs to create an environment where faculty and students can innovate. President Woodson stated USU continues to evaluate and make itself competitive in 4 ways:

- Ensure educational programs and methods evolve
- Become nationally recognized as a leadership academy
- Enhance the research portfolio and support healthcare advancement
- Ensure inclusivity where everyone is respected and can succeed

President Woodson noted that some areas need more thought:

- What does USU need to do regarding the development of data scientists?
- What does USU need to do to enhance health systems designs?
- What does USU need to do with policy to advance military health system?

He noted there is a lot of spectacular talent across the Board and that USU continues to build on that foundation. He thanked everyone in the meeting and looks forward to working with everyone.

Chair Dr. Dickey asked if there were any final questions, of which there were none.

## **SCHOOL OF MEDICINE REPORT**

Dean Elster introduced himself to the Board and discussed his career at USU. He presented his summary of Board report highlights (Tab 7). He stated that USU School of Medicine is an ideal military medical training and research location because it is near the National Institute of Health (NIH) and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. He noted research shows that USU outperforms civilian medical schools across several key measures which include Medical

Readiness, Operational Readiness, Command Interactions, and Role as a Military Physician. The student body has an equal ratio of both men and women. The School of Medicine offers a robust graduate program which is a mix of master's degrees, graduate certificates, and Doctoral degrees. The School of Medicine Departments includes Clinical, Basic Science and Support elements. Dean Elster commented that leadership starts from Day 1 and is integrated within the curriculum. Leadership builds from personal to interpersonal. He emphasized operational military medicine and noted this is what makes USU unique by preparing young men and women in military medicine. The main domains are education, leadership, service, and operational improvements. Six key themes include: 1) basic research, 2) transitional research, 3) clinical research, 4) system/operation research, 5) population health research, and 6) policy research. Dean Elster highlighted that USU ranks in the top 7% in research funding and that this is all health science research as USU does not have engineering and physics departments like other universities.

Dean Elster listed four critical success factors: 1) Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accreditation, 2) Objectives and Key Results (OKRs), 3) Joint Environmental Management Office Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (JEMO KSAs), and 4) Innovation Hubs. To ensure the USU graduate possesses foundational knowledge and skill in each of the areas, the SOM recognizes that education is a continuum and the full competence will be achieved at the Graduate Medical Education (GME) level. Every graduate has a KSA report card, which shows what they have attained. This is critical for both the deans and chair letter. Chair Dr. Dickey asked what it means when students are applying for a GME position. Dean Elster noted out of a class of 170, 10-12 went through a civilian match and were perceived as very strong candidates.

Chair Dickey asked if there were any final questions of which there were none.

### **GRADUATE SCHOOL OF NURSING REPORT**

Dr. Diane Seibert introduced herself to the Board and relayed Dean Romano's apology for not being able to attend. Dr. Seibert provided a summary of the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing (GSN) highlights (Tab 8). She started her presentation with the GSN mission and vision statements which can be found on slide 2 and slide 3. Dr. Seibert highlighted that the GSN offers Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science (PhD), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) and Master of Science in Nursing (MSN). Dr. Villarruel asked whether there was consideration of a track, similar to the program for entry into medical school, for entry into nursing school. RADM Hinton noted that USU should consider having an undergraduate nursing program or accelerated program. President Woodson stated that USU has the right faculty to train students to become licensed practical nurses (LPN) or registered nurses (RN). All academic curricula in nursing include leadership development. GSN has a total of 196 students; about half are male which is unusual in comparison to civilian nursing schools where males are a small minority. Dr. Seibert reported GSN's position in the top 5% in the US News and World Report, designation as a Center of Excellence of the National League for Nursing, and 100% Board Certification pass rate for the past 25 years.

VADM (Ret.) Bono highlighted nurses' burn-out during the pandemic. Dr. Seibert mentioned that USU pulled out students from coursework to work in the hospital intensive care units. She

noted that many nurses struggled with mental health. USU is currently promoting wellness by offering services through the University Counseling Center and Family Support Center. Dr. Villarruel stated her curiosity regarding psilocybin since the topic of discussion was mental health. She mentioned that researchers are evaluating and using psilocybin to treat anxiety, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. VADM noted that the VA may be involved in such research and noted that if a person were to take a psilocybin, it would be hard to pass a urine drug screen.

Chair Dr. Dickey asked if there were any final questions, of which there were none.

## **POSTGRADUATE DENTAL COLLEGE REPORT**

Dean Fallis introduced himself to the Board and summarized the origins of the Postgraduate Dental College (PDC). He referenced PDC highlights, which he provided in the Regents' material (Tab 9). He stated PDC's mission and vision which can be found on slide 5 and slide 6 of his presentation. Ensuring an elevated level of competence in all aspects of Dentistry within a four-year curriculum is a challenge for dental students. Dental graduates are required to complete additional training due to recent technologies, including use of restorative materials, three-dimensional (3D) imaging, digital surface scanning, 3D printing, and digitally targeted surgical techniques. Upon completion of a Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) or Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry (DMD), one year of additional residency is now included in many state licensing requirements. The states of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Washington, and Delaware have issued a "Postgraduate year one (PGY-1)" designation to ensure dentists are prepared to meet the state's dental needs. Altogether, the average student debt for a new practicing dentist is over \$300,000, which includes debt from an undergraduate degree, post-graduate degree, additional specialized dental training, and a state license.

Dean Fallis highlighted Graduate Dental Education's (GDE) relevance to the military mission, as dental care is: 1) essential to achieve a Medically Ready Force, 2) Essential to develop a Ready Medical Force, and 3) Essential for a Wounded Warrior's quality of life. To achieve a medically ready force, Dean Fallis stated 23-50% of all military recruits enter active dental prep class 3 and are ineligible for global deployment. Advanced skills are required to treat the most common disqualifying dental conditions, which include those requiring complex restoratives, endodontics, or oral surgery. To develop a ready medical force, Dean Fallis stated licensed dentists can enter the military but are not highly skilled after completing dental school. He noted that 75% of military dentists on active duty have acquired advanced skills in complex restorative, endodontics, or oral surgery. Regarding Wounded Warrior's quality of life, Dean Fallis stated that 28% military evacuees have suffered facial injuries and 45% result in malocclusion/open bite. Dean Fallis noted wounded Service members' medical and surgical treatment plans are complex and last a long time, and these include attention to dental and orofacial injuries and function. Dean Fallis emphasized that PDC is not all about teeth. They are required to meet reconstructive and restorative needs as well.

Chair Dr. Dickey asked if there were any final questions, of which there were none.

At 2:15p.m. Chair Dickey called for a break.

### **COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH REPORT**

Dean Pelayo introduced herself to the Board and began her presentation on how the College of Allied Health Sciences (CAHS) of USU was formed and chartered. She stated the CAHS mission and vision statement could be found on slide 3. She referenced the CAHS highlight summary found in the Regents' reading material (Tab 10). CAHS supports the growing demand for education and training required for professional practice in the Military Health System (MHS). Dean Pelayo stated that CAHS provides training that students need to reach his or her academic goals. CAHS helps students obtain academic certifications for students who already have some skills and training from their military service. CAHS significantly reduces the need for students to use tuition assistance to complete their degree – either during or after their military service. CAHS does not interfere with the provision of training required for service, and instead supplements and improves it. Operating locations that CAHS include Medical Education, Training Campus, US Army Medical Center of Excellence, Joint Special Operations Medical Training Center, and other instructional sites. Dean Pelayo highlighted the Navy Medical Forces Support Command which includes Navy Surface Warfare Medical Institute, Naval Undersea Medical Institute, Tri-Service Optician School – 1 Program, and Naval Aerospace Medical Institute. These sites are currently under discussion for growing opportunities that students can utilize. Dean Pelayo mentioned that the number of students and the number of programs is the largest among USU's schools, and that there have been challenges integrating CAHS students and programs into the Registrar system.

Chair Dr. Dickey asked if there were any final questions, of which there were none.

### **ACCREDITATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Mr. Henske presented an overview of all Accreditation programs affecting USU and noted the university-wide Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) visit March 23-26, 2023. He highlighted the seven rigorous and comprehensive MSCHE standards that a member institution must meet: 1) Mission & Goals, 2) Ethics & Integrity, 3) Design & Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, 4) Support of the Student Experience, 5) Educational Effectiveness Assessment, 6) Planning, Resources & Institutional Improvement, and 7) Governance, Leadership, & Administration. There are currently more than 160 people actively engaged in the self-study, with a dedicated leadership team and support from University leadership to meet or exceed those 7 accreditation standards

When asked if there were any write-ups in the previous inspection, Mr. Henske said the evaluators provided two suggestions: Tying strategic planning together across the university; and improve the Registrar functions to accommodate the growing and diversifying programs and student body. The University has been working to address both since the last accreditation visit. Gen (Ret.) Myers asked about the impact on students. Mr. Henske answered that the Registrar issues have affected CAHS students the most, and efforts have been underway by the University, CAHS, and Registrar to improve, assist, and educate on the processes.

Chair Dr. Dickey asked if there were any final questions, of which there were none.

## **DISCUSSION**

Dr. Holmboe asked how the BOR can be helpful to USU? President Woodson responded that the experience of the BOR is valuable, and that he hopes the Regents bring their experience forward in discussing alternative approaches when discussing USU initiatives and challenges. President Woodson also welcomed any suggestions for topics and briefers for the next BOR meeting. Regents mentioned briefs on University financing and the Registrar functions.

Dr. Frenk asked about capitalizing on the culture change or lessons learned from the pandemic and pivoting to a digital platform. President Woodson commented that USU already had a distributed learning base but needs to anticipate newer and evolving education strategies to best prepare graduates for medical and military service. One area is improving and expanding USU's simulation platform beyond task trainers.

Individual student progress was the next topic. President Woodson stated USU faculty note board pass rates, quality outcomes, KSA effort, education support tools, support for at-risk-learners, and the future of medical education. Dean Elster noted a long-term outcome study will determine the advantages of MHS, and could be a topic for a future BOR meeting.

The last topic of discussion was a question on what USU's obligation is to help promote those outside of the DoD with lessons learned and to be an example of excellence. President Woodson stated that increasing USU's recognition and expanding collaborations at all levels – from students to faculty - opportunities can open for all. He cited the collaboration between USU and the American College of Surgeons as an example, and proposed that opportunities with every professional society exist. HON Peake mentioned looking at opportunities for partnering with other Federal organizations like the VA. RADM Hinton reminded that equity of opportunity needs to be aligned with all uniformed services and not just the armed services.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

Chair Dr. Dickey asked if there were any final questions of which there were none.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Askins-Roberts adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

## **CERTIFIED BY:**

 October 5, 2022

Nancy Dickey, M.D.  
Chair, Board of Regents

Date