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//// MESSAGE from the Dean



Greetings, friends!

I am excited to share this issue of the Insider as we celebrate the School of Health Professions at 50 years! We'll share the history of the School of Health Professions, celebrate our accomplishments and interview former faculty who were instrumental in the success of this school. We have so much to celebrate and so much to look forward to.

The School of Health Professions has a rich history, which includes many new departments, significant leadership changes and continued progress towards establishing our identity. All of these significant contributions make us who we are today; a growing, strong, and committed school, advancing health care in Kansas and beyond.

As we spend 2024 celebrating the school, it goes without saying that we would not be where we are today without outstanding faculty and staff who have supported us over the years. Their dedication has fueled the advancement of our programs, research and students.

We hope you will find ways to join in our celebrations. We have so much to be thankful for and want to share our bright future with you.

Abiodun Akinwuntan, Ph.D., MPH, MBA, MIH, FSAHP, FACRM, FAMedS

Dean and Professor

KU School of Health Professions

Taking the Lead

Karen Miller and Abiodun Akinwuntan have led the School of Health Professions through its formative years.



Karen Miller, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, FASAHP



Abiodun Akinwuntan, Ph.D., MPH, MBA, MIH, FASAHP, FACRM, FAMedS

For the last 25 years, the KU School of Health Professions has been led by two individuals: Karen Miller, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, FASAHP, served as dean of both the School of Health Professions and the KU School of Nursing from 1996 until she retired in 2015. Abiodun Akinwuntan, Ph.D., MPH, MBA, MIH, FASAHP, FACRM, FAMedS, succeeded Dr. Miller as dean in 2016 and has led the School of Health Professions for the past seven and a half years.

We spoke to Dr. Miller and Dr. Akinwuntan about their experiences leading the School of Health Professions over the last quarter-century.

Q: What were the circumstances that led you to being named dean of the School of Health Professions?

Karen Miller: I was already dean of the KU School of Nursing when I was asked by the executive vice chancellor in 1997 to serve as interim dean for the School of Allied Health while they conducted a search for a new dean. The search committee eventually asked if I would stay on permanently as dean. It was the honor of my executive career.

1944...>

The Department of Physical Therapy Education is established. It was one of the first physical therapy programs west of the Mississippi River.

1952...>

The Hearing and Speech Department at the University of Kansas is expanded to include KU Medical Center.

Abiodun Akinwuntan: It was a coincidence that I became dean. I wasn't looking to leave my position at the College of Allied Health Sciences at Augusta University in Georgia. However, when Dr. Miller announced she was retiring, the search committee reached out to me after a colleague of mine who thought I would be a good fit for the job had contacted them. I applied and got the job!

Q: Dr. Miller, you were serving as dean of both the School of Health Professions and the School of Nursing at the same time. How did you manage that?

KM: I was also serving as the senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs! I think I was able to juggle everything because I had a lot of energy and passion and a talented and experienced group of team members and department leaders in both schools who helped me manage things.

AA: I know how demanding the dean's job is, so it was a tremendous feat for Dr. Miller to take both dean positions on and do such an amazing job.

Q: The School of Health Professions has such a wide variety of departments and programs. As dean, how do you work to try to bring these diverse programs together as one school?

AA: It definitely wasn't an easy thing to take on. When I came to KU seven and a half years ago, I made it clear to our chairs that with all of us working together, we would be stronger than just focusing on our individual departments. All of our departments

were doing well, but I felt that together, we could be unstoppable.

KM: I didn't know about some of the health professions departments when I took on the deanship, but I dug in and learned by talking to the department heads. It was a privilege to get to know them and their expertise. The school had a few large departments and quite a few smaller departments. One of my priorities was determining how to share resources and money among all of those departments so everyone could grow and flourish together. As Abiodun said, it was important to convince everyone that we were stronger together.

Q: The amount of research and research grants grew significantly during both of your tenures as dean. How did this come about?

KM: In the School of Nursing, we had established an office of grants and research to support the nursing faculty. While I was dean, I worked to make those resources available to School of Health Professions faculty as well. I think adding more doctoral programs at the School of Health Professions also attracted more researchers and additional funding.

AA: The University of Kansas is known for its research excellence, and I wanted the School of Health Professions to be a major contributor to that fame. Our research funding has increased 19-fold over the past seven and a half years, which I am very proud of. Our researchers are engaged in several studies either as principal investigators or as collaborators with other

researchers in the school of medicine, and nursing, and at other institutions. With the establishment of School of Health Professions first research center, the Center for Community Access, Rehabilitation Research, Education and Services, or KU-CARES, our research funding is expected to grow even bigger in the next couple of years.

Q: What achievement are you most proud of during your time as dean?

KM: I am most proud of launching the school's clinical doctoral programs in physical therapy and rehabilitation science, occupational therapy, dietetics and nutrition and speech-language pathology. Because of that, we were able to recruit outstanding faculty to support those programs. All of these efforts helped to greatly increase our research funding through external grants and also provided more exceptional student research experiences.

AA: All the accomplishments we have made over the past seven and a half years have been a team effort. In addition to the growth of our research enterprise, I am proud we launched eight new degree programs, increased student enrollment every year for the past seven years and have all our programs in the top 14 among all public institutions in the US according to the U.S. News and World Report rankings among all public institutions nationally. All of these accomplishments were made possible by the support and generosity of our Board of Advocates, our Alumni Board and KU Endowment, as well as the leadership of KU Medical Center.

1968...>

The Respiratory Care program begins accepting students.

1971...>

The Health Information Management program, then Medical Record Administration, accepts its first three students.

Degrees Awarded

The School of Health Professions has awarded thousands of undergraduate and graduate degrees since 1975.

| DEGREES OFFERED | NUMBER OF STUDENTS GRADUATING SINCE 1975 |
|-----------------------------|--|
| DOCTORAL-Ph.D. | 105 |
| PROFESSIONAL ENTRY DEGREE | 1,128 |
| POST-PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE | 628 |
| MASTER'S | 1,219 |
| BACHELOR'S | 1,628 |
| CERTIFICATES | 162 |
| INTERNSHIP | 257 |

DEGREE PROGRAMS

DOCTORAL

Medical Nutrition Science
Rehabilitation Science
Therapeutic Science

DOCTORAL—ENTRY

Audiology
Nurse Anesthesia
Occupational Therapy
Physical Therapy

DOCTORAL—POST

Clinical Laboratory Science
Occupational Therapy
Speech-Language Pathology

MASTER'S

Audiology
Dietetics and Nutrition
Molecular Biotechnology
Occupational Therapy

MASTER'S—ENTRY

Athletic Training
Occupational Therapy

BACHELOR'S

Clinical Laboratory Science
Health Information Management
Respiratory Care

CERTIFICATION

Cardiovascular Sonography
Integrative Medicine
Nuclear Medicine Technology
Ultrasound and Vascular Technology

INTERNSHIP

Dietetics and Nutrition

1974...>

The School of Health Professions, then the School of Allied Health, is established during a reorganization of academic departments.

1974...>

The Department of Biometry joins the school.

A Witness to Growth and Change

One person who has had a front-row seat for many of the changes that have occurred at the KU School of Health Professions is Jennifer Jones, MLS(ASCP)cm. Jones has the longest tenure of any faculty member in the school. For the past 40 years, she has been a clinical instructor leading undergraduate courses in clinical hematology in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences. She also teaches student laboratory and professional development in the bachelor's degree program in clinical laboratory science.

Jones' link to the University of Kansas goes all the way back to her birth.

"I was actually born at KU Hospital when my father was a medical student," Jones said. "I grew up for the most part in Prairie Village, and I left Kansas to attend college in North Carolina at Duke University, where I graduated with a degree in zoology.

After earning her degree from Duke, Jones moved back to Kansas with the intention of finding a job in a research lab.

"I applied to what was then known as the medical technology program at KU Medical Center," Jones said. "I worked weekends in the hematology lab, and my supervisor encouraged me to become involved with teaching clinical laboratory science students. I've been doing that ever since."

Jones said teaching students is her passion.

"I love hematology and enjoy teaching students all things about the clinical



Jennifer Jones, MLS(ASCP)cm.

lab," she said. "Teaching keeps me on my toes because each class and every student learns differently. I love the hands-on learning that happens in my lab classes. I have always enjoyed looking at interesting cases under the microscope and I love when students learn to apply what they learn in lectures to what they see in the lab."

Jones said she has witnessed quite a few changes in the School of Health Professions over the past 40 years.

"Obviously the name of the school has changed. It was the KU School of Allied Health until 2011," Jones said. "Our department has also grown considerably since I started. The credentialed title of our graduates has changed from medical technologist (MT) to medical laboratory scientist (MLS). And we now offer two

undergraduate concentrations — clinical and molecular biotechnology. We also have developed the doctorate in CLS (DCLS) program and recently added the masters in genetic counselling program."

Jones added that there have been many improvements in technology and automation used in the clinical laboratory making it possible to perform more complex lab tests with greater efficiency. She said the critical thinking skills and the knowledge her students have acquired by the time they graduate is important in providing excellent patient care.

"I am honored to have been able to prepare students for these past 40 years and proud to be a part of the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences as we celebrate 50 years."

1977...>

Dr. Ron Harper becomes the first dean of the School of Health Professions, then called the School of Allied Health.

1978...>

Nurse Anesthesia Education joins the school as a bachelor's degree program.

The School's Pinch Hitter

John Ferraro has stepped into many leadership roles at the School of Health Professions over the years.



John A. Ferraro, Ph.D.

John A. Ferraro, Ph.D., served as chair of the Department of Hearing and Speech and co-director of the Intercampus Program in Communicative Disorders for 34 of his 36 years at the University of Kansas School of Health Professions. Under his leadership, the Intercampus Program gained a national reputation as one of the top graduate programs in speech-language pathology and audiology.

In addition to his long tenure as department chair, he served in a number of other leadership positions, including interim associate dean for faculty practice in the School of Health Professions, interim dean of the School of Health Professions, associate dean for research of the School of Health Professions, acting dean of the School of Allied Health (as the school was called until 2011) and associate dean of the School of Allied Health.

Ferraro retired in June 2020, but he still enjoys talking about his years with the School of Health Professions and all of the different roles he took on over the years, including serving as interim and acting dean of the school twice. Ferraro recalled that he had just been on the faculty at the School of Health Professions for two weeks in 1984 when he was called on to help with a vacancy in the dean's position.

"Stata Norton had resigned her position as dean due to health reasons, and KU Medical Center's executive vice

1979...>

Dr. Sandra Petersburg becomes acting dean, making her the first woman to hold the deanship.

1980...>

Dr. Stata Norton becomes dean.

chancellor asked me to chair the search for a new dean,” Ferraro said. “The search led to the hiring of James Cooney as dean. Shortly after he arrived, Dean Cooney asked me to be his assistant dean, while I was still serving as the chair of the Department of Hearing and Speech and co-director of the KU Intercampus Program in Communicative Disorders. I’m not sure why, but I agreed to Jim’s request. So, when Cooney left KU Medical Center in 1991 for a deanship at Emory University, I was a likely candidate to serve as the acting dean until a new one was appointed.”

Ferraro said the second time he was persuaded to serve as interim dean was in 2015.

“In 1997, the new dean of KU School of Nursing, Karen Miller, was asked to serve a dual role as the dean of both the School of Nursing and the School of Health Professions. She served as dean of both schools for 19 years, and during this time, I was her associate dean for research,” Ferraro said. “So once again, I was the most likely candidate to serve as interim dean when Dr. Miller retired, and I did so until Dean Akinwuntan was hired in 2016.”

Ferraro said it was his honor to serve as interim dean when called upon.

“I felt qualified to serve in this position, and I thought that I could be helpful to the School and KU Medical Center in

doing so,” Ferraro said. “My goal was to do what I could to pave the way for a smooth transition to the school for a new dean.”

Ferraro said there were both successes and challenges for him while serving twice in the acting and interim dean role.

“When Dr. Cooney was dean, the school was still relatively young and was in the process of developing its identity within KU and KU Medical Center,” Ferraro said. “Turf wars were constant in those days as was the hiring of new chairs and faculty members. All of these activities were very challenging, but also rewarding when met with success.

Ferraro said he also had to deal with financial challenges while serving as interim dean.

“Budgetary problems presented unique challenges then just as they do now. Fortunately, Karen Miller continued on the course of strengthening our standing within the KU Medical Center while expanding the School of Health Professions’ academic, research and clinical programs.”

Ferraro added that one of his roles as associate dean of research was to help School of Health Professions faculty, especially new hires, acquire laboratory space.

“I likened this task to helping resolve border disputes between warring countries,” Ferraro laughed. “Countries often go to war over space, and in many ways, KU Medical Center is like a small country!”

Ferraro also admitted that although he enjoyed his time as interim dean, it was occasionally overwhelming to serve as dean while he continued to carry his responsibilities as chair of the Department of Hearing and Speech and associate dean of research.

“My day job was always chairing the department and I never let my appointments as interim and acting dean or even associate dean of research usurp the needs of the department.”

But Ferraro said he is grateful that he has had a ringside seat over the years to watch the School of Health Professions prosper.

“It has been my privilege to see the school grow to become one of the best in the country,” Ferraro said. “We always have several departments with very high national rankings, and every aspect of what the school offers to its students has improved over the many years that I have been at the KU Medical Center. I am very proud to have been a part of this growth.”

1981...>

The Department of Allied Health Science is established. It was discontinued in 1987.

1984...>

The Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, formerly Medical Technology, joins the school.

Adept at Adapting



Lou Loescher-Junge

For a school to sustain, grow and reach 50 years of continued success, adapting to change is essential. The School of Health Professions is lucky to have had its very own dependable security blanket for nearly half its existence.

In the late 1980s, the KU physical therapy degree program faced a difficult time. An unusually long span

without a permanent department chair had created instability. The profession's mandate to update training for physical therapists across the country to a master's degree from the existing bachelor's degree level was not going smoothly. As such, the only physical therapy program in the state of Kansas at the time was facing the real possibility of losing

its full accreditation status from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.

The School of Allied Health (as it was known at the time) decided in 1991 to look outside campus for help. Contacts within the physical therapy community found a seasoned clinician with leadership experience,

1985...>

Dr. James P. Cooney, Jr., becomes dean.
The Department of Occupational Therapy Education joins the school.

1988...>

The last class of the Emergency Medical Training programs graduates.

and she was located right here in Kansas City working as a consultant: Lou Loescher-Junge, M.A., PT.

Immediately after joining KU, Lou recognized very real challenges were ahead. First, she knew she would have

ranks among the best in the nation by external review organizations.

It was also in 1993 that Lou accepted a role in school leadership as assistant dean for administration. However, by 1994, she was needed in another of

person for student issues, and for our others in need of assistance. As Donna Nyght, DNP, CRNA, current chair of the Department of Nurse Anesthesia Education, recalled, “Lou was the person, when I became the chair, that I would go to first for any kind of advice – and I needed a lot of advice back then. She had integrity, and I trusted she’d steer me in the right direction. She was a tremendous mentor for administrators or anyone in a new leadership role.”

Officially, Lou retired in 2015. However, at the request of Abiodun Akinwuntan, Ph.D., she immediately returned to assist in his transition as new dean of the school in 2016. Her extensive experience and insight into the fields of health care served as an invaluable resource to Dean Akinwuntan and helped smoothly shepherd the school through yet another major change in its history.

Lou was the person, when I became the chair, that I would go to first for any kind of advice – and I needed a lot of advice back then. She had integrity, and I trusted she’d steer me in the right direction. She was a tremendous mentor for administrators or anyone in a new leadership role.

-Donna Nyght, DNP, CRNA

to restructure the curriculum in line with the requirements expected of a master’s degree in physical therapy. And second, she also had to rebuild KU’s image in the eye of the accrediting organization. Oh, and she was told there would be no new funding or additional support available.

Adapting to the situation and dedicating herself to the goal, by 1993 Lou was successful in implementing major curricular updates and helped the school find a permanent department chair for the first time in years. Today our physical therapy program is a doctorate degree and has been fully accredited for the past 30 years. It also consistently

our departments. She spent 1994-1995 leading the Department of Health Information Management as interim chair. Serving a leadership role at both the school and department levels at the same time is not common, and for good reason: it just isn’t easy to do. Yet Lou was there to fill a need for the school, again, despite the extra workload.

Over the next 20 years in administration, Lou was actively involved with all eight departments of the school, and she often facilitated connections between programs spread out across the vast KU Medical Center campus, each with their own needs and challenges. Described by others as fair and kind, Lou was also a point

A dedication to do whatever is needed, when it is needed, will be just one part of Lou’s legacy with the School of Health Professions. From establishing large, endowed scholarships for our students, to returning to campus to present the annual Lou Loescher-Junge Service award each year, Lou’s dedication and commitment to the school’s success continues to this day.

Her ability to adapt to challenging situations and work with others has had a direct positive impact on the school’s success that is still felt today.

1991...>

Dr. John A. Ferraro becomes acting dean.

1992...>

Dr. Lydia Wingate becomes the first woman permanently appointed dean.

The School of Health Professions Over the Years

Photo contribution by Matt Schuette, Ph.D., Director of Institutional Research.



Circa 1940 Dietetic and Nutrition students prepare formula



Circa 1950 Hearing and Speech department promotional photo



1946 Physical Therapy artificial fever treatment

1997...>

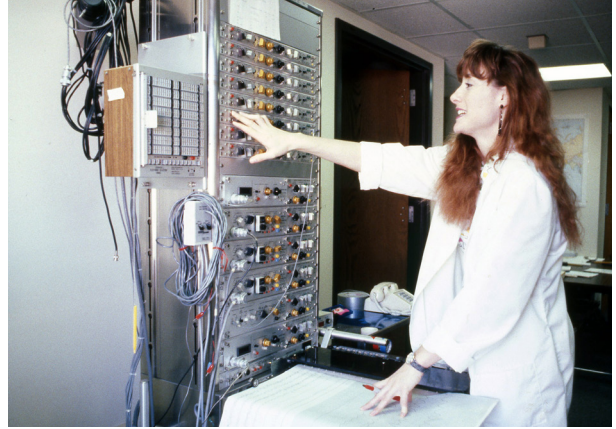
Dr. Karen Miller, who was already dean of the School of Nursing, becomes dean, taking on a dual appointment.

2000...>

Three certificate programs join the school: Nuclear Medicine Technology, Cardiovascular Interventional Technology and Diagnostic Ultrasound Technology.



Circa 1960 Physical Therapy heat therapy



1992 Respiratory Therapy sleep lab



1996 Medical Records department



1981 Nurse Anesthesia



2003 Clinical Lab Services

2011...>

The School of Allied Health officially becomes the School of Health Professions.

2016...>

Dr. Abiodun Akinwuntan becomes dean.

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theinsider

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

*Details are coming soon on the
**KU School of Health Professions
Anniversary Gala to be held in 2024.**
Visit the School of Health Professions
website in early 2024 for more
information!*

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