



March 11, 2014

Last week, Dr. Francisco Fernandez was warmly received in the Valley, where he was introduced as the founding dean of the UTRGV Medical School. While he does not begin his tenure until April 28, Dean Fernandez is already working on the planning phases of the institution.

Among the first tasks Dr. Fernandez sees as important is the accreditation of the medical school by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) by 2016. Dr. Fernandez also visualizes the need to hire faculty and staff for the new medical school. Key personnel and faculty will help him design a modern medical school curriculum and residency program of study where the

students will be taught with a team-based care foundation and where the students will work with patients from the very beginning.

The consolidation of the existing Harlingen and Edinburg Regional Academic Health Centers (RAHC) of the UT Health Sciences Center in San Antonio with the soon to be constructed new medical school building, next to the RAHC in Edinburg, will also take up much of Dr. Fernandez' time, once he starts on April 28.

A Brownsville Herald story reports: "The new dean remains unfazed by the charge of a medical school that uses technology and long-distance style learning. In fact, he says this technology is already widely used. He says he has worked with global research teams already. [...] 'If we can do them between here and Peru, we certainly can do them between Brownsville and McAllen,'" the new dean said.

Dr. Fernandez punctuated his enthusiasm and drive by saying: "Everyone told me making this work is going to require great effort. Ok, bring it on, I said."

Welcome to UTRGV, Dean Fernandez!

The UT System Board of Regents Does Its Part

M.D. Degree:

At its February 5 and 6 meeting, the UT System Board of Regents approved preliminary authority for UT Rio Grande Valley to include a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) and to notify the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board of the forthcoming proposal.

\$54 Million for Medical School Building on the Edinburg Campus:

The UT Board of Regents also approved design development plans for the new medical school building, and appropriated funds and authorized the expenditure of \$54,000,000 with funding from the Permanent University Fund (PUF) Bond Proceeds.

This project will enhance the goal to expand medical education as outlined in A Framework for Advancing Excellence throughout the UT System.

The building will be completed in time to matriculate the first UTRGV medical school class in the Summer/Fall 2016. The building will house core administrative facilities for the dean's office and approximately 30 faculty members. It will be constructed on an area of the Edinburg campus that is adjacent to the medical research building previously constructed as part of the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC).

The approximately 88,200 gross square feet of space will be devoted to teaching facilities that promote faculty and student interaction at the earliest stages of medical school. The space will include lecture halls that can be converted to smaller breakout rooms for multi-professional education and simulated patient cases. It will also have multiple classrooms and seminar rooms for small group problem-solving and "flipped classroom" learning. The project will include an auditorium, a digital library, and a clinical skills center for sophisticated testing of students' knowledge, skill, and values; pre-clinical M.D. labs; and a human structure lab to accommodate shifts in the technology of teaching of human anatomy. Consistent with accrediting body requirements, it will have a student lounge and study space. The building will make extensive use of online and distance learning as part of a region-wide Medical School interacting with complementary facilities at Harlingen and Brownsville as well as support continuing professional education in the region.

\$14 Million for UTRGV Student Information System (SIS) and Human Resources and Finance Enterprise System:

The Board of Regents also authorized \$14 million of the Permanent University Fund (PUF) for:

- a) A new Shared Services Initiative to create and implement a Student Information System (SIS) at UT Rio Grande Valley, including implementation services, hardware/software, support, initial hosting and disaster recovery;
- b) To implement an SIS as a second business unit at UT Permian Basin;
- c) To expand the UT Share Human Resources and Finance enterprise system to include and support UT Rio Grande Valley; and
- d) To provide basic campus and implementation support to UT Rio Grande Valley and UT Permian Basin.

SIS is essential software for academic institutions to provide campus self-service financial aid, recruiting and admissions, student administration, student financials and student records.

Working Group Reports:

The complete reports of the academic working groups are posted on UT Brownsville and UT Pan American university websites. Each website provides a link to the Project South Texas

Academic Programs Working Group Reports. A separate file contains all of the executive summaries. Faculty will be encouraged to submit their feedback through the portal, but they can also provide feedback through the Town Hall meetings, if they prefer.

Ask a Question or Offer a Suggestion

Remember that you can learn more about UTRGV by submitting an anonymous question to the [Ask a Question section](#) of the Project South Texas website. Every effort will be made to post a response within 24 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Julio S. Leon

*Special Advisor to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
The University of Texas System*