Dear Alumni and Friends,

Greetings! We hope you are enjoying the spring.

This is the last hard copy letter you will receive from us given our regional campus’ impending closure. Please do watch for the final e-newsletter coming out next month. If you have any questions, please contact me jokela@illinois.edu. Below are a few recent updates.

As part of our efforts with the Racial Reform and Social Justice Task Force led by Assistant Dean JoAnn Archey, this semester our students discussed the book The Racial Divide in American Medicine relating the history of Medicine in Mississippi. It has been said to understand U.S. history, one must know the history of the South. The same can be said of the history of U.S. Medicine. Our students led a fabulous discussion, and we highly recommend this book.

At Memorial Stadium on March 18, we celebrated a joyous Match Day together in person (finally!) with the class of 2022. Champaign-Urbana’s News-Gazette captured the essence of the day in an article published March 20. Thanks to Dean Jim Hall, Julie (Wyant) Hardway, Jackie Newman, and Todd Patrick for a terrific event.

On Friday evening May 6 at the I-Hotel, close to two hundred attendees gathered to celebrate our college, our accomplishments, each other, and you. We enjoyed a delightful evening with wonderful company, great food, and free swag. Also, we proudly posted a new, outdoor plaque commemorating the College at the entrance of the Urbana Medical Sciences Building. With support from campus leadership in Urbana and Chicago, and input from faculty and staff, the plaque became a reality. Do stop by when you visit campus for your own photo with the plaque.

We celebrated convocation and awards on Saturday, May 7 at Alice Campbell Alumni Center, in person (yes!). Andrea Palazzolo Ray, MD, PhD—who matched into Orthopedics at Indiana University—gave superb remarks as valedictorian. Following convocation, we gathered for a lovely outdoor reception at the gardens of University President Tim Killeen’s home in Urbana: a fitting finale to a remarkable weekend. Many thanks once again to Associate Dean Jim Hall, Julie (Wyant) Hardway, Jackie Newman, Todd Patrick, for planning this wonderful event.

Work on our regional campus' hard copy and online legacy publication continues, which will wrap up soon. A limited number of hard copies will be printed, and a link to the online version will be located on our ‘final’ website medicine.uic.edu/urbana. Many thanks to the talented project leads, writer Cathy Lockman and graphic designer Patricia Mayer. Thank you to those of you who provided comments, remembrances, and photos. Please note we received hundreds of
pages of comments and will not be able to incorporate everything into the final project. That said, we will save and archive, in perpetuity, all submitted comments.

In case you missed it, good news for many of you is that the Medical Scholars Program (MSP) continues in Urbana under the Directorship of our MSP Director Jim Slauch, PhD.

As we reflected at the celebration dinner on May 6, what is a legacy? Personally, I like what Lin Manuel Miranda says: it is “planting seeds in a garden you never get to see.” That is exactly what we have been doing for the past 51 years. We have supported, nurtured, taught, guided, and yes, inspired, thousands of students who have passed through our doors. Our graduates’ impacts—your impacts—in your communities, clinical practices, research endeavors, advocacy work, and across the country and the world, we may never know. But all of us have been fortunate to have been a part of your journey. We beam with pride. As I stated at convocation, in 1971 Founding Regional Dean Daniel K. Bloomfield established our regional campus, and this year our doors will close after 51 momentous years. We are closing on a high note, thanks to the class of 2022 and all the classes—meaning you—which have gone before.

Thank you once again for your steadfast support of our students. Especially as we proceeded through our final academic year, your support and mentorship meant more than ever. We thank you.

Wishing you all the very best for many years to come.

Sincerely,

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