



OFFICE OF THE DEAN
DAVID GEFLEN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT UCLA
GEFFEN HALL
885 TIVERTON DRIVE, #400
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90095-1722

June 27, 2017

VA National Academic Affiliations Council (NAAC)

Attn: Stephen K. Trynosky JD, MPH MMAS
Designated Federal Officer
Office of Academic Affiliations (10A2D)
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington DC 20420

Dear Council Members,

We appreciate this opportunity to provide comments in connection with the planned July 12-13, 2017 meeting of the NAAC. The David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA has had a close and highly productive affiliation with VA Greater Los Angeles (VA GLA), since the founding of the school in the 1950's, with mutually beneficial arrangements in medical student, nursing, allied health and postgraduate medical training, as well as in clinical care and research. VA Greater Los Angeles has the largest number of postgraduate training positions in the VA system, over 450, and the majority of these positions are integrated into elite UCLA-sponsored training programs in internal medicine, surgery, psychiatry and many other disciplines.

The success of these training programs has produced and attracted outstanding physician faculty, many of whom provide clinical care to veterans at VA GLA across all disciplines. These UCLA faculty directly benefit the VA, providing outstanding clinical care in joint clinical programs in primary care, inpatient hospitalist care, mental health, and surgery. Highly specialized care to veterans is only possible with such arrangements in interventional endoscopy, interventional radiology, biliary surgery, and Moh's dermatological surgery, to name just a few areas. The stated goal of our clinical department chairs is that the quality of medical care provided to veterans at VA GLA must match or exceed the care provided to patients at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

UCLA is closely integrated with the VA GLA research programs, including many joint research programs in health services, laboratory research, clinical and translational science. Ultimately, the foundation of the outstanding clinical care and training programs shared by UCLA and VA GLA is the recruitment and retention of quality faculty to VA GLA. Many of these faculty are involved in research, and the ability to care for veterans, teach and perform research is the central motivation to come to the VA. Faculty, even those with predominantly VA-based research programs, require UCLA resources for core facilities, data analysis, clinical research resources, and collaboration. Academic mentorship is the core of career development awards. The ability of faculty to perform research at both the VA and university, with a minimum of barriers, is essential for success of the high quality faculty we want to provide care to veterans.

We are committed to maintain and grow these programs in clinical care, education, and research with VA GLA, but we want to highlight one area that we believe is essential for the success of this relationship. There are

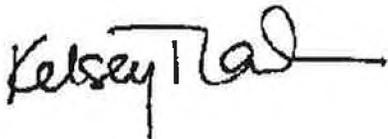
extremely limited resources available at the VA and VA Nonprofit Corporations to recruit and retain high quality physician scientists. VA GLA is primarily able to provide research space and this space is often in need of renovation. Furthermore, a large amount of infrastructure, personnel, and funds for equipment and supplies is required for recruitments, which is not available through the VA GLA. This investment for faculty must come from UCLA and its Departments. An example is the success of the UCLA Department of Medicine, which in the last 5 years has invested millions of dollars in the VA clinical and research infrastructure, laboratory renovations, and recruitment packages for over 30 physician scientists. This has resulted in the growth of an NIH portfolio of 20 million dollars in direct funding, and many of these investigators have now also received VA research awards, including merit grants, VA career development awards, and VA cooperative studies. It is essential that there is flexibility for grants to be administered through the university, both to allow full access to university resources as well as utilizing the high quality grant administration resources that are available. These arrangements at VA GLA vary by Department, based on commitments to invest in VA research infrastructure. The liberty and flexibility to make local mutually beneficial arrangements for grant administration needs to be preserved, to allow continued UCLA investment in the research and clinical programs at VA GLA.

We appreciate the opportunity to raise these issues and express our strong support for flexibility in NIH grant administration. We highly value our close relationship with VA GLA and the opportunity to serve veterans.

Sincerely,



John Mazziotta, M.D., Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor, UCLA Health Sciences
CEO, UCLA Health



Kelsey Martin, M.D., Ph.D.
Dean
David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA



Alan M. Fogelman, M.D.
Executive Chair
UCLA Department of Medicine