Dear Einstein Community:

COVID-19: There is little doubt that the coronavirus has come to dominate most of our lives over the past several months.

But as the Bronx and New York State cautiously emerge from the pandemic, I want to take the opportunity to celebrate exciting research and education activities taking place at Einstein—some involving COVID-19, others not—that inspire hope for our future.

A great deal of this news is highlighted in the most recent edition of Einstein & Montefiore Connections, our digital newsletter, which was published earlier this week—and I strongly encourage everyone to read it.

New Appointments
We recently announced two major appointments: Edward Chu, M.D., M.M.S, who was named director of the NCI-designated Albert Einstein Cancer Center and vice president of cancer medicine at Montefiore; and Earle Chambers, Ph.D., M.P.H., who was appointed director of the division of research in the department of family and social medicine at Einstein and Montefiore.

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce the promotion of Todd Cassese, M.D., to associate dean for medical education from assistant dean for clinical sciences education. (We will have more to say on Todd’s promotion in a separate communication.)

NIH Grants and Research Publications
In terms of NIH awards, there have been many positive developments. Of particular note, Ana Maria Cuervo, M.D., Ph.D., and her lab have received $16M to study autophagy and aging; the Einstein-Mount Sinai Diabetes Research Center
received $9.5M; Elyse Sussman, Ph.D., received a $4.6M grant to study “chemo brain” in children; Marla Keller, M.D., and Liise-anne Pirofski, M.D., have received $4.3M to study convalescent plasma in hospitalized patients; and Helena Blumen, Ph.D., received $3.5M to study the brains of older adults.

In addition, our young investigators are experiencing success: Britta Will, Ph.D., was awarded the prestigious 2020 Pershing Square Sohn Prize, which provides $600,000 over three years for innovative basic science cancer research.

While these funds will underwrite the cost of future research, our faculty continues to publish new research, both on COVID-19 and in other areas, including papers by Paul Frenette, M.D., on sickle-cell disease; Will Southern, M.D., Dr. Keller, and Shitij Arora, M.D., on the use of steroids to treat COVID-19; Kartik Chandran, Ph.D., who has developed a new “surrogate” coronavirus; and finally, Aviv Bergman, Ph.D., who published on the daily ups and downs of COVID-19 reporting.

**Excellence in Education**

Einstein students continue to demonstrate their excellence in academics and community service. In this year’s presentation of Diversity in Medicine scholarships, three of the five new awards given by the Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY) went to Einstein post-baccalaureate students Diana Perez, Obioesio Bassey, and Juan Vazquez. There were 22 applicants from around the state vying for this competitive honor, and the selection of our students is an indication of their dedication and commitment to working with underserved communities.

**Resourceful Philanthropy**

To top it all off, there are positive trends in philanthropy. Teams of Einstein-Montefiore researchers are conducting a range of studies of the novel coronavirus thanks to four $50,000 pilot projects made possible by donors. A donation from Einstein Board member Nathan S. Kahn funded the purchase of a new virtual anatomy table, and we have other commitments in support of graduate medical education and research in the pipeline. In addition, over the last several weeks, Einstein alums have collectively raised over $50K for the student hardship fund (personal grants for students impacted by COVID-19).
**Historic Announcement**
While not directly linked to Einstein, this week we have all witnessed an historic event: the announcement that Kamala Harris, a woman of color, will be running for vice president of the United States. Regardless of your personal political leanings, this news reflects and will inform the movement to address systemic racism and racial injustice across and throughout our society. This is an extraordinary time and we applaud and support the recent seismic cultural shifts that have brought us to this point, even as we work to advance necessary change at Einstein.

Given these and other developments, it’s clear that many positive things continue to happen at Einstein, despite the pandemic. It’s a promising start to what looks like a great—albeit different and challenging—academic year.

I look forward to discussing all of this and more during tomorrow afternoon’s dean’s chat, starting at 1:30 p.m.

**Sincerely,**

Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D.
The Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean
*Albert Einstein College of Medicine*
Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer
*Montefiore Medicine*