



SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE

December 2021

Dear Felicia,

We know diversity, equity and inclusion matters. At UNC School of Medicine, we have spent almost 50 years investing in future medical students through programs like the Medical Education Development (MED) program. By recruiting and training students from underrepresented backgrounds, MED has shaped the growth of our school tremendously. However, despite this progress, disparities persist.

Such disparities were only highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Health structures struggled in their efforts to level the playing field. Educational structures failed, too—with representation by historically underserved populations remaining stagnant.

You can help us right the system...one student at a time. At Carolina, we believe that we must transform the educational environment toward equity and inclusion. This transformation doesn't happen by accident but by intention, careful planning and generous support from our family of donors, like you.

This is why I'm thrilled to introduce a new, year-long medical school preparatory program, formally launched this year, called Carolina MED EXCEL (Medical Education Development Early eXperience in Clinical Education and Learning). Right now, EXCEL is training its first class of students. **On these students' behalf, and on behalf of all future MED EXCEL students, I urge you to pay forward your UNC School of Medicine education to the next generation, with a gift of \$100, \$250 or even \$500 to this exciting program.**

Do you remember wearing your white coat for the first time as a medical student? Do you remember first meeting your fellow students and the faculty? When you joined UNC School of Medicine, you joined a family of leading caregivers for North Carolina.

EXCEL is designed to take everything we have learned with the MED program and transform the education of healthcare professionals by creating leaders among the most at-risk members of our community. The first cohort of 9 students, along with the faculty, are committed wholeheartedly to change and a growth mindset for the year-long program. We hope to increase the class size from 9 to 20 over the next few years.

(turn over)



"I am very fortunate to be a part of the inaugural MED EXCEL class. To me, MED EXCEL is like having the study guide for an exam. From fostering improved test-taking skills to increased case-based learning and exposure to clinical settings and patient care—it feels like each day is preparing me to become a better physician."

–Darren Schuman

"The MED EXCEL program has allowed me opportunities that I otherwise would not have. Our group is small and tight-knit, which enables me to build relationships with leadership and peers. We have also been gifted learning tools that will impact my approach to learning for years to come."

–Estefania Gonzales



Here's how EXCEL promises to make a meaningful difference to students and the many lives they will touch through their profession. EXCEL:

- o builds on a successful, 50-year foundation of the intensive Medical Education Development (MED) program
- o cultivates high-quality applicants pulled from the SOM admissions pool who might not otherwise be able to enroll
- o provides students with housing and a monthly stipend so they don't incur additional expenses for the year of training
- o aims to meet not only academic needs but students' clinical and psychosocial needs

Though you might not be able to join them in person, I hope you will join the inaugural MED EXCEL class in spirit—through your kindhearted giving. UNC School of Medicine generously put up the initial investment, at a cost of \$77,000 per student for the 2021-2022 year. But private support—from friends and donors like you—will sustain this revolutionary program for the future.

A strong, diverse pipeline of today's medical students—tomorrow's physicians for North Carolina—begins with you. I hope you will take this opportunity to show your appreciation for all you value about your UNC School of Medicine education. An equitable and just future for medical education starts today.

With sincere gratitude from all of us at UNC School of Medicine,



E. Nate Thomas III, PhD
Vice Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

P.S. Please take this opportunity to pay forward your UNC School of Medicine education to the next generation. Make your gift to EXCEL or the fund of your choice—for a healthier, more equitable and more just future. Thank you!