October 31, 2018

Dear Einstein Community:

Since my return to campus in mid-July as dean, I’ve been amazed at how Einstein has been transformed since I was a student. Yet despite the many positive changes in recent decades, some things remain the same: specifically, Einstein’s rich and enduring legacy, as well as the promise of an unlimited future.

I’ll start with the legacy. The founding faculty at Einstein included some of the nation’s best teachers, researchers and clinicians. Giants in their fields. Men and women such as: Saul Korey, Irving London, Abe White, Alfred Gilman, Sr., Berta and Ernst Scharrer, and Salome Gluecksohn-Waelsch. They pioneered collaborative approaches to science, research and medical education. And I was fortunate enough to be taught by some of these legends.

I also recall with pride how social justice was (and remains) a core value of the College of Medicine, living up to the goals and aspirations of our namesake. During commencement in May, Dean Allen Spiegel gave me a copy of the letter that Albert Einstein wrote to Dr. Samuel Belkin, allowing the College of Medicine to be named after the great scientist and humanitarian. The letter was displayed in Allen’s office for more than a decade, and I now have the privilege of seeing it on my office wall. The words written by Einstein—stressing that the College of Medicine “will welcome students of all creeds and races”—are as cherished and meaningful today as they were when first expressed over six decades ago.

But our legacy would be meaningless if it didn’t embody our present and our future. I’ll cite just one example. A few weeks ago, I reaffirmed the Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan established by a talented and dedicated advisory committee, led by Dr. Ed Burns and Yvonne Ramirez. It allows Einstein to continue and enhance our deep commitment to social justice. I also believe the words expressed in the plan’s mission statement could have been written by Einstein himself. They state that “it is our duty to provide the best care, produce the best science and train the best future physicians and scientists—a task that can be accomplished only with a highly diverse and inclusive institutional climate.”

These values are clearly part of our institutional DNA. Most important, they endure.

Maximizing Our Partnership with Montefiore

Montefiore is equally dedicated to our mission of social justice—bringing clinical excellence to its deep commitment to serving everyone in our community. When you combine a first-class medical school, superb students, talented teachers, and rigorous researchers with Montefiore’s outstanding clinical care, you have a formidable enterprise—more specifically, a world-class academic medical center. Our partnership with Montefiore will become even more powerful when we receive full degree-granting authority, which Einstein is close to achieving.

We are enjoying success on many fronts. Just this year, Einstein and Montefiore have announced: a New England Journal of Medicine study led by Dr. Joseph Sparano that immediately changed clinical treatment practice for the most common form of breast cancer; the $25 million grant to continue our joint Block Institute for Clinical and Translational Research at Einstein and Montefiore; and a new chair of our Montefiore Medicine board of trustees—Daniel Tishman—who will lead us into the next phase of our integration, which remains a top priority.

This remarkable run will undoubtedly continue. After an extensive search, we have identified outstanding candidates for the director of the cancer center. This individual will bridge innovative basic, translational and clinical research with individualized, integrated treatment approaches that will benefit the patients we serve. The
unified center also will create outstanding opportunities for our students and postdocs as they navigate the
overlap in research and clinical practice, which is so prevalent in cancer care.

We see this in our own cancer therapeutics program, which has been successful in moving multiple discoveries
into clinical trials, particularly treatments for blood cancers, for example, by targeting pre-cancerous and leukemic
stem cells. In addition, our strength was demonstrated by our participation in the CAR-T study for refractory B-cell
lymphomas, whose results were published late last year in the New England Journal of Medicine. We were the
second site in New York City to offer the treatment, after Memorial Sloan Kettering. Given Montefiore’s patient
base, this demonstrates how we are developing and providing cutting-edge treatments to historically underserved
communities, helping to address disparities in care that are still significant.

The naming of a cancer center director will come in the wake of other outstanding recent recruits who have joined
Einstein in the past three years, yielding first-rate appointments in medicine (Dr. Yaron Tomer, from Mount Sinai),
in psychiatry and behavioral sciences (Dr. Jonathan Alpert, from Harvard/MGH), in neurosurgery (Dr. Emad
Eskandar, from Harvard), and in radiology (Dr. Judy Yee, from UCSF). Additionally, we’re benefiting enormously
from new leadership in biochemistry (Dr. Steven Almo), in molecular pharmacology (Dr. Jonathan Backer), in
neuroscience (Dr. Kamran Khodakhah), and in our Belfer Institute for Biomedical Sciences (Dr. Anne Bresnick).

**Gifts and Contributions Support Greatness**
As we celebrate our past, present and future, we also recognize the invaluable generosity of donors who make
our success possible—from the original benefactors who helped launch Einstein to those who support research
and scholarships today. Their participation, along with the involvement of our talented alumni, is crucial now as
we advance our eight funding priority areas: aging, brain science and psychiatry, cancer, community health, heart,
medical education and innovation pediatrics, and transplantation.

Additionally, we value the many contributions of those who work at Einstein. To more fully demonstrate the regard
we have for employee efforts in behalf of Einstein’s mission, our human resources department has introduced our
BRAVO! program and some new employee awards. I encourage everyone to learn more about these honors and
to make nominations for those you believe are most deserving. I’m personally looking forward to presenting the
awards when we hold the service recognition ceremony later this year.

**Connecting with Our Neighbors**
As we value those here at Einstein, we must always remember that we’re part of a larger community in the Bronx.
Our involvement with our neighbors helps to shape the education that our students receive, whether through
projects of our Community-Based Service Learning Program or spending time at clinical sites throughout the
borough. It also informs many of the important relationships that enrich our own campus community. It’s my hope
that we will tap into the many opportunities offered through these connections, expanding the outreach that’s
been ongoing for decades.

In closing, I want to thank you all for making my first quarter as dean an exhilarating experience. I’ve enjoyed
meeting many of you and look forward to meeting many more in the weeks and months ahead.

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