

Creating a new culture

Board seeks a climate of professionalism at UTMB

This is the second in a series of columns on professionalism by UTMB's president, Dr. John D. Stobo. In his first column, Dr. Stobo touched on moving the university's professionalism efforts from an informational stage to an accountability stage. This column will detail the charge he has given to the newly created UTMB Professionalism Board to help create a new culture at UTMB—an environment in which all university employees and students hold each other accountable for their actions, and professional behavior is both encouraged and rewarded.

On July 11, I invited a handful of UTMB leaders to an early morning breakfast in my office. My goal was to share with them my vision for professionalism at UTMB as we move into this new accountability phase and welcome them as members of the recently created UTMB Professionalism Board.



Stobo

After briefly going over the history of professionalism here, I gave all the board members the opportunity to share how they perceive the level of professionalism at UTMB. I then challenged them to find ways we can further encourage sustained professional behavior throughout the institution.

The discussion was very lively, and we had a couple of healthy debates. We agreed that the climate here is improving, but we still face challenges in bringing this university to the desired level of professionalism. In their book "Built to Last," James Collins and Jerry Porras write that, "Good enough never is." Therefore, while I'm happy we're making strides, I want us to always ask ourselves how we could do even better tomorrow than we did today.

Because it's tough to measure the level of professionalism campuswide, we need to devise ways to help us better understand how employees perceive the culture at UTMB. I'm looking forward to seeing the results of the UTMB employee survey, which is part of the Richards/Gravelle initiative. This will give us a good view into the collective mind of UTMB and will tell us where you think we are in terms of creating a climate most conducive to providing the very best in education, patient care and research.

As I mentioned in May 8 edition of *Impact*, the accountability phase of our professionalism efforts will include new ways of rewarding employees who decide to take the lead by looking outside themselves and making the needs of others a priority. The GEM

program, or "Going the Extra Mile," will give us a means to highlight exceptional employees on a UTMB-wide basis. GEM was modeled after an excellent employee recognition program in Support Services. Many departments have devised their own ways to recognize outstanding employee behavior, and I am strongly encouraging every department that hasn't done so already to integrate this program into their other employee recognition activities.

In addition to the GEM program, we will continue to look for new ways to recognize exceptional employees before their peers, which we believe will further encourage professionalism in the workplace. While it's one thing to expect leaders to model professional behavior for their staff, it's another thing altogether to create a desire among peers to hold one another accountable for their behavior. I would like each of you to help by giving your fellow workers encouragement and praise for the professionalism they exhibit as they go about their day-to-day activities. We hope that as more UTMB employees understand how vitally important professionalism is to fulfilling our mission and remaining financially viable, this new attitude will catch on like wildfire.

I believe our Principles of Service (POS) classes are another great opportunity for employees to weigh in on what they think and feel about the university. They've become mini-focus groups for employees—a chance for them to speak out on what they've seen at UTMB and offer suggestions to change the climate and the culture. I have asked members of the president's council to introduce each POS session, and I attend at the end of the day whenever possible to answer employee questions. We highlight professionalism a great deal in these classes, and I believe POS will continue to be a powerful vehicle for change at UTMB.

I'll be asking the UTMB Professionalism Board to meet with me once a month. I look forward to hearing more of their thoughts on ways we can encourage every UTMB employee to remain aware of our awesome responsibility in the health care profession. Professionalism is the guiding principle of health sciences universities nationwide. Please join me in creating an environment in which all UTMB faculty, staff and students recognize and accept their responsibility to act as accountable professionals.

These names of employees with 10 years of service were inadvertently left off the Employee Service Day list in the Aug. 7 Impact:

Nicole Marshall
Patricia Martinez
Refugia Martinez
Eunice Martinez-Kitchen
Nancy Maser
Mary Mayes
Emmanuel Mbidoaka
Rheda McAdams
Jean McAtee
Morgan McCaleb
Jessica McCall
Vickie McDaniel
Russell McDonald
Audrey McDowell
Paula McFatter
Sandra McGuire
Arthur McNeel
Lawana McNeely
Carmen Meadows
Fang Mei
Connie Melecio
Georgia Melton
Leticia Mendez
Gary Mennie
Charles Mennor
Jodi Mensch
Freddie Merchant
Edward Messimer
Larry Micheletti
Delores Middleton
Terumi Midorohoriuti
Alana Mikkelsen
Pauline Miller
Vonday Millier
Jeanette Minter

Loretta Mitchell
Debra Mock
Belinda Moessner
Alex Molina
Paula Montgomery
Malcolm Moore
Leola Moore
Cheryl Moore
Gaye Morgan
Randal Morris
Denise Morris-Trahan
Aimee Morrison
Lyska Morrison
Charles Moss
Sandy Mouton
Tracy Murphy
Nicole Murray
Jane Murray
Kaye Naranjo
Susan Nawara
Thanhnhhan Nguyen
Peterminh Nguyen
Janice Nolan
Deborah Norris
Jennifer O'Brien
Mary Oatis
Merlyne Olson
Mary Onugha
Stephen Orrell
Melissa Osorio
Kenneth Ottenbacher
Laura Parker
Debra Parker
Angel Parsons
Charles Pastrano
Ester Peoples
Dianne Perez
Maria Perkins
Carolyn Perry
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