

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY HERBERT WERTHEIM COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

MESSAGE FROM DEAN ROBERT SACKSTEIN

I feel truly honored and privileged to return to my hometown as the new dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine at Florida International University. Dean John Rock and the entire FIU leadership team have done a remarkable job in establishing a nationally recognized medical school that provides exceptional clinical education grounded in social consciousness.

Green Family Foundation NeighborhoodHELP exemplifies this commitment—that we are of the community, for the community. Since 2009, this service-learning initiative has assigned faculty-led teams of FIU medical, nursing, social work, and physician assistant students, and education and law students as needs are identified, to care for the medically underserved in the community. The College has wonderful community partners who assist with NeighborhoodHELP, while also setting the standard for clinical care in their own hospitals. Our students are fortunate to complete their clinical training with these partners, as they are learning from the best of the best.

I am proud of these partnerships and our service to the community, and I am committed to safeguarding this legacy. Looking ahead, I see the opportunity to marry this excellence in care with cutting-edge clinical innovation. I envision developing a world-leading cell-based therapeutics program at FIU and taking it to our community partners for validation through clinical trials. These advances are within our reach and hold the promise to cure osteoporosis, certain cancers, catastrophic congenital diseases, and other disorders. Such breakthroughs will ensure FIU is known not only for the quality of patient care but also for game-changing clinical innovation.

This will be an unbeatable combination: having the most competent, most dedicated, and most compassionate faculty and students pioneering better therapeutic options at South Florida hospitals. It will put our College and our region at the forefront of next-generation medicine, and it is no pipe dream—we can do this. We are a young, nimble medical school that can move quickly. This breakthrough science will propel the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine along a 10-year course that will elevate the College's ranking among the nation's top 10 medical schools. I will get up every day with that goal in mind, driven to show the world what sets the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine apart.

These are lofty goals, and we have much work ahead of us to realize them. Today, I ask you to join us on this journey that will secure the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine's role as the Next Horizon in medical education, translational research, and clinical care. Together, we can realize this bright future.

Sincerely,



ROBERT SACKSTEIN, MD, PHD

Dean and Senior Vice President for Health Affairs



NEXT HORIZON
The Campaign for FIU

DEAN ROBERT SACKSTEIN

Robert Sackstein, MD, PhD, became Dean for the FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine and Senior Vice President for Health Affairs in January 2019. He is a highly accomplished clinician, researcher, and educator who was formerly with Harvard Medical School, where he was Professor of Dermatology and Medicine and Co-Director of its Glycoscience Center.

As both a basic and clinical scientist, Dr. Sackstein has focused on glycoscience, which concerns the role of sugars in biological systems, and his work has yielded strategies to optimize cell-based therapeutics to regenerate damaged tissue and combat cancer. His work at Brigham & Women's Hospital, a Harvard teaching hospital, garnered funding to create the world's largest research infrastructure for a dermatology department.

Born in Havana, Cuba, Dr. Sackstein came to Miami at the age of 4. He attended Harvard University as an undergraduate and received an MD and a PhD from Harvard Medical School, then returned to Miami for a residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital/University of Miami. After completing additional fellowships in immunology and hematology, Dr. Sackstein joined the UM faculty. In 1993, he accepted a position at the University of South Florida and was recruited by Harvard in 1997.

Dr. Sackstein's work has been recognized internationally, and he helps lead several renowned medical research organizations.

HERBERT WERTHEIM COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

The Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine was established in 2009 and has since graduated 492 medical students. The College's medical students have consistently performed at a high level, scoring higher than the national averages on STEP 1 and 2 exams. They also match into some of the most prestigious residency programs in the nation.

The College's signature innovation, Green Family Foundation NeighborhoodHELP, is a nationally and internationally recognized approach to medical education and healthcare delivery. This program deploys interdisciplinary student and faculty care teams to underserved households in Miami-Dade County. In 2016, the College's unique approach to medical education, which focuses on social accountability and the social determinants of health, was selected by the Association for Medical Education in Europe as one of four recipients of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Award in Social Responsibility.

