

ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

THOUGHTS AND UPDATES FROM DR. W. P. ANDREW LEE

Aug. 20, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

I write to share the news that **Jon Williamson, Ph.D.**, holder of Arnold N. and Carol S. Ablon Professorship in Biomedical Science, has announced his intention to step down from his position as Dean of the School of Health Professions after a successor is identified.

Dr. Williamson completed undergraduate studies at The University of Texas at Austin and received his Ph.D. from the University of North Texas Health Science Center, followed by postdoctoral training as a research fellow in the Division of Cardiology at UT Southwestern. He joined the UT Southwestern faculty in the School of Health Professions (SHP) in 1995.



Over the course of more than 30 years at the SHP, Dr. Williamson has served in progressive leadership roles, including Assistant Dean for Research, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Chair of the Department of Health Care Sciences, and Interim Dean. He also earned a Master of Science in Management and Administrative Sciences from the Naveen Jindal School of Management at UT Dallas. In 2015, he was appointed Dean of SHP, assuming responsibility for overseeing its academic and research programs, strategic planning, and clinical operations.

Under his leadership, the school was reorganized to focus on rigorous graduate-level health professions programs. SHP established a Ph.D. research training program in Applied Clinical Research designed for allied health professionals from multiple disciplines. It also launched the Master of Science in Nutritional Health – the first fully online program at UT Southwestern – and, more recently, the Master of Genetic Counseling program. The school's Master of Physician Assistant Studies program consistently ranks among the top 10 in the nation.

During his tenure, the school's clinical practice has gradually expanded in physical therapy and prosthetics and orthotics. SHP also maintains graduation rates and first-time licensure pass rates well

above state and national benchmarks.

With support from the American Heart Association and the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Williamson's research programs have focused on neural control of the circulation, neuroplasticity, and cortical remapping following injury and rehabilitation. He has served as PI or co-PI on extramural grants and contracts totaling more than \$24 million in direct funding.

A Distinguished Teaching Professor, Dr. Williamson supported the creation of the Interprofessional Development, Education, and Active Leadership (IDEAL) program, which facilitates interdisciplinary interaction across programs within the SHP and UT Southwestern. He has also championed initiatives to improve student performance and well-being and has continued teaching in the Applied Clinical Research program.

Dr. Williamson is a fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine and the Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions (ASAHP) and currently serves as ASAHP's President.

I am pleased to announce that **Antonia Chen, M.D.**, Professor and Chair of Orthopedic Surgery, will chair the committee that will conduct a national search to identify Dr. Williamson's successor. Other members of the Search Committee are:

- **Jaclyn Albin, M.D.**, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, and Public Health
- **Susan Hernandez, D.N.P., M.B.A., RN**, Vice President and Health System Chief Nurse Executive
- **Jay Horton, M.D.**, Director of the Center for Human Nutrition, Professor of Internal Medicine and Molecular Genetics
- **Alex Kane, M.D.**, Professor of Plastic Surgery
- **Heakyung Kim, M.D.**, Professor and Chair of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
- **Markey McNutt, M.D., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor in the Eugene McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development, and in the Departments of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics
- **Marc Nivet, Ed.D., M.B.A.**, Executive Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Interim Executive Vice President for Business Affairs
- **Chris Rubio, M.B.A., FACHE**, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the UT Southwestern Health System
- **Andrew Simpson, M.D.**, Associate Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery and Neurological Surgery
- **Dwain Thiele, M.D.**, Professor Emeritus of Internal Medicine
- **Babu Welch, M.D.**, Professor of Neurological Surgery and Radiology

- **Alyssa Hasty, Ph.D.**, Vice Provost and Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Career Development – *ex officio*

We are grateful for Dr. Williamson's service and contributions to SHP and the broader UT Southwestern community, and we look forward to building on the success achieved under his leadership.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

W. P. Andrew Lee, M.D.

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Dean, UT Southwestern Medical School

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