

Letter from the Chair

Robert C. Schenck Jr, MD



I am pleased to present the fifth volume of *The University of New Mexico Orthopaedics Research Journal*. As the premier academic orthopaedic training program in the state, The University of New Mexico (UNM) Department of Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation provides services and information to benefit the people of New Mexico and

orthopaedic practitioners who care for them—something we have done with distinction for almost 50 years. Our entire group of residents, fellows, nurse practitioners, physicians, physician assistants, and staff members functions as a supportive community and team, with the same purpose and mission. The popularity of the program extends beyond UNM and into national recognition for resident education.

This journal is quite special, and our research continues to prosper under the leadership of UNM faculty and financial support of the Sandia Orthopaedic Alumni Society (SOAS), allowing us to share state-of-the-art orthopaedic information with our many partners in New Mexico and the Southwest. I am proud to reveal several of our accomplishments during the past year.

As evidenced by this journal, research productivity at our department continues to develop. The total number of publications increased from 12 in 2009 to 77 in 2015. We are very grateful for the leadership provided by Drs. Deana M. Mercer, Christina Salas, and Thomas A. DeCoster, with Dr. Mercer as the director of research. Our appreciation also goes to Dr. Gehron P. Treme, Residency Program Director, for his initiative in helping residents complete requirements of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (commonly known as the ACGME). This allows our residents to become experienced in research activities as an equal part of becoming outstanding orthopaedic physicians.

Lastly, my thanks to the many attending physicians, residents, and medical students who create such excellent presentations and publications. The addition of a research incentive program, along with the invaluable dedication from Drs. Mercer and Salas, has fueled scholarly pursuits in the department. This journal was the dream of many, and

reaching the fifth volume makes me reflect on the interest and desire of Mary A. Jacintha to create it, who recently moved on to be the executive administrator of UNM Health System. After a national search, we were thrilled to hire our own Gail A. Case as department administrator. Congratulations to them both!

Our faculty continuously grows and reflects the great culture of an orthopaedic family. We are very excited to bring in Dr. Dustin Richter (sports medicine, with a keen interest in research). We are also thrilled to include Sandoval Regional Medical Center (SRMC) in our list of facilities devoted to orthopaedic inpatient care. I would like to thank UNM and SRMC faculties for helping our practice become even more robust. We send our kindest thanks to Dr. Charlotte Orr for her dedication at SRMC and wish her the best of success in her trauma fellowship in Indianapolis, IN. Our appreciation and support similarly extends to Dr. Bryon Hobby as he returns home to begin private practice in Billings, MT. We congratulate Dr. Paul Echols for his appointment to chief medical officer at SRMC.

We hope all the best for our five senior residents as they end this phase of their careers (as “Junior-Junior” faculty at UNM) and begin new ones. Dr. Luke Bulthuis will begin his sports medicine fellowship at Kaiser Permanente Orange County in Irving, CA. At Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, Dr. Judd Fitzgerald will perform his sports medicine fellowship. Dr. Michael “Mischa” Hopson will similarly leave for a sports medicine fellowship, at Houston Methodist in Houston, TX. A trauma fellowship will be pursued by Dr. Reilly Kuehn at UC Davis in Sacramento, CA. Finally, Dr. Heather Menzer will complete her sports medicine fellowship at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA. We are so proud of this year’s resident class, and I am grateful for the support of their families and friends. These five orthopaedic surgeons are extremely talented and will be missed here in Albuquerque. Luke, Judd, Reilly, Mischa, and Heather, we are most proud of your accomplishments. I, along with the entire department, thank Dr. Treme for his outstanding leadership in the overarching education of UNM orthopaedic residents. I would also like to thank Joni L. Roberts for all of her work and dedication in the process of educating UNM orthopaedic residents.

I am pleased to add that our division of physical therapy, under the direction of Dr. Burke Gurney, has grown into an amazing education jewel for New Mexico. The division now has 10 full-time faculty members (soon to be 11) with

expertise in orthopaedics, adult neurology, pediatrics, acute care, geriatrics, and cardiopulmonary physical therapy. These educators (and practitioners!) oversee three cohorts of 30 students who, after successfully completing the 3-year program, obtain a Doctor of Physical Therapy. The physical therapy division will celebrate its 40th anniversary and had a recent accreditation review that highlighted many fantastic achievements.

I want to thank our loyal alumni of SOAS for their enormous dedication and support, which includes hosting three annual events. The Eric Thomas Memorial Golf Tournament is held every September in honor of Dr. Eric A. Thomas (Class of 2004), in which we see alumni from all over the country enjoying Albuquerque's great fall weather at the UNM Championship Golf Course. Additionally, the Joel Lubin Visiting Professorship lecture series occurs every spring to pay respects to Dr. Joel W. Lubin (Class of 2001). This event was recently moderated by Dr. Jonathan Bolton (UNM Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences), who led invaluable discussions on emotions and positive behaviors in the operating room. And, thirdly, we always look forward to visiting with alumni at the SOAS-sponsored reception during the annual meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank all the residents, faculty members, staff members, and nursing and mid-level providers for their support and kindness throughout my illness this past October, when my appendix and I decided to part ways. Special thanks to my children and my wife, Patricia, for their compassion and love during my time in the hospital and recovery at home. Thank you all.

Each year, the assistance of alumni becomes more important to the orthopaedics department. SOAS, created exclusively for graduates of our program, has a new lifetime membership available for a pledge of \$25,000 to the Sandia Circle (\$5000 every year for 5 years). I am a proud funder and lifetime member of SOAS and invite you to join me in becoming one, too. This is an exciting time to participate in the growth and success of our department. In addition to supporting the publication of this journal, you at SOAS support our outstanding resident surgeons. We are grateful to the following alumni and faculty for pledges of \$25,000 in helping the SOAS support resident-related activities: Drs. John M. Veitch, Gehron P. Treme, Deana M. Mercer, Kevin M. McGree, Sanagaram S. Shantharam, Joseph K. Newcomer, Brian J. Robinson, Dean W. Smith, John C. Franco, and Jennifer L. Fitzpatrick.

Finally, I want to highlight the outstanding efforts of faculty in caring for our patients. Figure 1 represents our annual clinical productivity from January 2011 through December 2015, in which we performed notably more

operative procedures to treat our many patients with joint-related injuries. The additions of SRMC in 2012 and Dustin T. Briggs, MD (who specializes in total joints) resulted in twice as many of these procedures performed since 2011, nearing our annual goal of 1000 total joint procedures. With each passing year, we strive to offer and perform more services to care for the people of New Mexico.

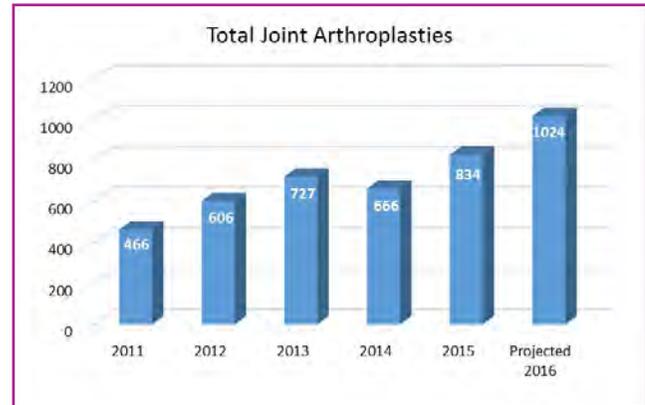


Figure 1. Total numbers of operative procedures performed from January 2011 through December 2015 for treating injuries of the hand and finger, hip, knee, and shoulder. Notably, numbers of projected procedures for 2016 (as of April 2016) indicate continued growth toward our annual performance goal of 1000 total arthroplasties.

It has been another great year at The University of New Mexico Department of Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation. We express our sincerest gratitude to you—the alumni, faculty, and general community—for your continued support.

Thank you.

Robert C. Schenck Jr, MD
Professor and Chair