

## Global Jefferson

I am delighted to have been selected as the first Associate Provost for Global Affairs at Thomas Jefferson University (TJU). The creation of this position underscores TJU's expanded commitment to a global agenda in education, research, and service.

There is increased recognition that health disparities occur not only in under-resourced countries, but right here in Philadelphia. Through [Jefferson's Center for Urban Health](#), its leadership in population health, its activities in supporting refugee healthcare and its ties with [Puentes de Salud](#) (Bridges of Health), serving the Hispanic community of Philadelphia, Global Jefferson continues to reaffirm support for addressing diversity in our community and to becoming an academic leader in the rapidly expanding global health arena.

TJU is not new to global health. Since the opening of TJU's international office 25 years ago under the able leadership of Janice Bogen, Assistant Vice President of International Affairs, and her staff, we have seen a continuous growth in ethnic diversity among our student body and a significant interest in increasing the opportunities for bilateral exchanges to foster learning, understanding and cultural competency.

The convening of the Committee for Global Health Initiatives 9 years ago, with representation from each of TJU's colleges, has led to the creation of education modules through the [iCE](#) (Interactive Curricula Experience) platform that will help "jump start" a planned overseas educational experience. The potential for expanding on this initiative to incorporate its use by all global health participants, and the addition of an evaluation methodology is in the works.

In fact, TJU presently maintains 76 affiliation agreements in 31 countries. These agreements have spurred a rich history of pedagogy which has included opportunities

for expansion of degree granting programs and certifications, support for seminars, lectureships, and exchanges, and an overall increase in global health research. Examples of these successful programs/exchanges are linked to academic centers in England, Israel, China, and Rwanda.

It is in this context that I bring my own NIH-funded research to the TJU family, which focuses on the leading causes of mortality and morbidity among women and newborns worldwide. With our colleagues in India and 5 other countries within the [Global Network for Women and Children's Health Research](#), we have, over the past 13 years, initiated 16 clinical trials and published 200 papers in indexed peer-review journals. We are proud to have been the first to prove and report on the effects of misoprostol to prevent postpartum hemorrhage, the leading cause of maternal mortality. Our work has been highlighted as an initiator for this lifesaving drug having been added to the [World Health Organization's List of Essential Medicines](#). The Global Network now maintains a registry of over one-half million births through 6 weeks postpartum, with follow up rates exceeding 98%, and remains a vital resource for ongoing studies.

Our newest trial, generated by our own team, will focus on preterm birth, the leading cause of neurodevelopmental childhood disability, through a large multi-country randomized, placebo-controlled trial employing the use of low-dose aspirin by consenting nulliparous women. The study will continue for a minimum of 3 years and will add to our understanding of the pathophysiology associated with preterm birth.

Aside from maternal child health research that is anticipated to grow, there is notable research being carried out by our TJU faculty with partnerships in Japan, China, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, Israel, Portugal, Canada and other countries.

Our strategic vision for the future will incorporate the development of a registry to better track the important work of our education, research, and bi-directional exchanges. We will also assign additional resources to prioritize country-specific programs that will include India, Japan, China, Italy, Portugal, Israel, Rwanda, and our newest partner, St. George's University London. There have also been recent initiatives that may support specific requests from Ireland, Jordan and South Africa and some exploratory discussion on the development of a Latin American strategy.

As a component of the strategic plan, we hope to build upon the success of the long-standing Japan Center with similar initiatives in India, Italy, and China.

Despite many notable activities at our University encompassing global health, there appeared little opportunity to highlight the exceptional work of our TJU researchers and educators. In this regard, an inaugural [Global Jefferson Day](#) event was convened on January 30, 2017 with contributions from 30 speakers.

Highlighting the event were supportive comments by Jefferson's President, Stephen Klasko, MD, MBA, and Provost, Mark Tykocinski, MD. Recent political events underscored the importance of their timely commitment to Global Jefferson. It is noteworthy that Dr. Klasko has listed expansion at Global Jefferson as among the top 5 priorities for the coming year.

Matt Baker, PA-C, DHSC, Philadelphia University's Provost, added an additional dimension to this event by reflecting on the significant international exchanges that have been a mainstay of Philadelphia University's educational mission. The opportunities to incorporate design and biomaterials into our common agenda will help to expand horizons for collaborative research.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

The keynote presenter, Shivaprasad Goudar, MD, MHPE, Director of Research at our Belagavi, India site (KLE University) reinforced the importance of initial grant funding and focused on the theme of maternal child health by showing how capacity building can lead to development of a globally recognized body of work.

It is my hope that Global Jefferson Day will become an annual event providing opportunity for students and faculty to

both share their contributions and inform meaningful future academic collaborations.

While education and research will always remain central themes, we will also be exploring the opportunity to initiate distance learning, telehealth, and 2nd opinion programs and to better include representation from our local community in these exciting areas of Jefferson growth, through GLOBAL JEFFERSON.

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