

# FROM THE DEAN

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The practice of medicine, despite dramatic changes in diagnostic and therapeutic options, still depends on communication, critical thinking, and diagnostic and therapeutic acumen. We focus much of our educational efforts on these enduring aspects of medicine. However, we are always striving for better ways to help our students learn. In this issue, we delve further into the expanding influence of technology on medical education in the early 21st century, and we raise the question: Are we creating a new kind of medical school? I believe there also is a related question: Can we afford not to?

As U-M President Mary Sue Coleman recently stated upon her reappointment to a second term, universities exist to pave the way to tomorrow. We as a medical school must think in new and creative ways about what we do and how we do it, availing ourselves of new tools and methods that further our goals.

Technology today provides access to seemingly limitless clinical and research information through biomedical databases and digitized library holdings. The Internet allows transmission of information and communication from anywhere in the world. Virtual patients present dramatic new views of anatomy and the opportunity for repeated practice of procedures and techniques that can accommodate individual learning styles, paces and needs. Furthermore, we can assess how students are learning, gathering information and coming to clinical conclusions, which is what we are training them to do. We seek to prepare the foundation for our students so they will be equipped to adapt to change and continue to learn throughout their careers.

It is a *different* kind of medical school we have today, one we must pursue to “pave the way” to tomorrow’s medicine, utilizing the most promising advances and methods to educate and train our students so they will continue to be leaders and best.

Sincerely,



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Photo: Martin Voet

